

THE  
CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN.

No. XXXVII.—JANUARY, 1882.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE LIFE OF  
CHRIST.\*

IT is not merely by His Word that Jesus asserts His Divine Kingship ; He does it not less by His deeds, or in the domain of action. He acts as much as He teaches ; and in action as well as instruction, He displays a sovereign power to which we must accord the only designation which is appropriate,—that of the *supernatural*. Here we touch one of the burning questions of the present day. The more it is discussed, the more do I feel bound to face it frankly and unreservedly.

That Jesus Christ claimed supernatural power is evident from the whole of the Gospel history, and I need not stop to prove it. It is affirmed, not merely in the Epistles of St. Paul, but also in the oldest and most authentic document, in which the most prejudiced critics cannot but recognise the faithful echo of his ministry. If we admit, as many now believe, that the account of St. Mark forms what may be called the original Gospel, every one will acknowledge that, from first to last, miraculous action is recorded on the part of Jesus Christ. It will of course be said that all those marvellous touches are but the spontaneous creation of the popular Jewish fancy, which could not imagine a religious hero without investing him with the glory of a worker of miracles. One fact, however, effectually refutes this assertion, and proves that our evangelists were quite able to resist this seductive influence. In the first century of our era, there lived a prophet who enjoyed an immense popularity—a man who played such an important part that the historian Josephus, who seems to have scarcely known Jesus Christ, has to him, on the contrary, accorded an important place ; this man was John the Baptist, whom Jews and Christians have equally revered. Nevertheless, we do not find that the Gospels ever attribute any miracle to John ; they picture, in a clear and thrilling way, his ministry, his preaching, and his death, without inserting a single touch of the supernatural—thus proving that they were able to conceive of

\* This paper has been written expressly for *The Catholic Presbyterian*.—ED.  
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an authentic Divine mission without attaching to it any miracle. But, when they come to Jesus, it is quite another matter, and on every one of their pages we find ourselves face to face with actions which imply a power absolutely superhuman. Does this mean that their style is altered—that their narratives thenceforward become less exact, more obscure, more legendary, and give fewer indications of being the product of witnesses who have seen and heard what they relate? On the contrary, these same Gospels portray Jesus, His character, His conduct, and His teaching in so vivid, original, and powerful a manner, that the picture has survived the changes of centuries; they preserve His words in such grandeur that their authenticity impresses itself on every mind not blinded by invincible prejudice. Every one feels that those deep and searching maxims, those answers which probe the matter to the bottom, those parables which are so clear and wondrously original, and those other powerful discourses of His were really uttered and have been faithfully reproduced. Many of these sayings, however, are so closely interwoven with the actions of Jesus—the cures which He performed with what we call His miracles—that it is impossible to fancy anything more compact.

I cannot forbear making here a historical comparison. The first biographers of Mohammed have filled his life with marvels; they tell us of a tree which moved to and fro before him; of water which, at his touch, sprang forth from broken cisterns; of visions in which legions of armed angels came to share in his battles. All these stories, however, may be suppressed without in any way affecting the personality of Mohammed, without making the Suras of his Koran lose anything of their peculiar dulness and monotony; and this remark, which I apply to Mohammed, holds equally true of many other religious heroes. After some little practice, a critical sagacity suffices to distinguish, in their lives, between the original foundation and the additions which have been made to it.

But this separation between the supernatural and the real, cannot, I affirm, be effected in the history of Christ without deforming it, and making him an incomprehensible and sometimes unnatural Being. In fact, one or other of two things must be true: either the actions attributed to Him are real, or they are purely imaginary. If they are real, and we deny their supernatural character, we are reduced to the necessity of regarding them as merely the efforts of a clever thaumaturge who imposed on the credulous multitude; but this is a miserable explanation, which criticism can apply only through having recourse to efforts of over-strained argument, and it stands in such jarring contrast with the moral sublimity of Christ, that it will never satisfy educated consciences, nor even simple common sense. If these actions are the product of imagination, the difficulty connected with them remains not less insoluble; for, in this case, one must admit that His biographers—who have, with scrupulous fidelity, transmitted to us so many sayings,

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and even long addresses which they could not have invented because the instruction contained in them was quite above their capacity—either sacrificed self-respect, or became the victims of their own weakness or of the most strange hallucinations, when, in the same pages, they narrated these actions of Jesus. And yet it was infinitely more easy to verify these actions than the sayings, since it was enough to open one's eyes in order to be assured of their reality. The problem, evidently, is hopelessly insoluble; hence, we are right in concluding, on this point, that if any one refuses to admit the miracles of Jesus Christ, it is not by any means because the historical testimony is insufficient, but really because of preconceived reasons—because the impossibility of the miraculous has been laid down as a dogma. Let us look for a moment at this alleged axiom, and see what must be thought of it.

The idea of the supernatural is at present suffering such discredit that many think it ruined for ever. "We can see the day coming," wrote M. Renan lately, "when belief in supernatural events will be as inconsiderable in the world as the belief in ghosts and witches is at the present day."\* The cause of this discredit is a complex one, but it is especially due to the method to which Auguste Comte has given the name of "Positivism," and which consists in excluding from the domain of science every metaphysical and religious explanation in order to keep rigidly to observed facts. Thanks to its apparent simplicity, this method is at present triumphant; but we have yet to see whether it is adequate to explain our moral and religious destiny: this, however, is what, for our part, we emphatically deny.

There is a system, as old as Epicurus, which maintains that nature is sufficient to explain itself,—that everything in nature resolves itself into matter and its properties. This most logical and well-known system is materialism. It is evident that those who accept it have no need of the Supernatural,—no need of God, or of a First Cause, or of moral freedom, or a future life, or any religion. They reduce everything to a single substance, matter, and to a single principle, force, which, in its successive evolutions, produced the world as it now appears.†

I am not discussing this system, but merely state the fact that at present it enjoys immense popularity. Besides, I do not address myself to materialists at all, but to men who admit that thought is not the mere result of a change in the position of molecules; that mind differs from matter *in kind*; that moral freedom is a reality; that the world cannot be conceived of as existing apart from Supreme Cause, at once intelligent and perfect. One would think that these men, in virtue of these

\* See letter in the Italian journal *La Lega*, of 1st November, 1881.

† Positivism, as is well known, dislikes being confounded with materialism. I may be allowed, however, to remark that their conclusions are really identical. This is implicitly acknowledged by M. Littré, when he says:—"The world consists of matter and its forces. . . . Beyond these two terms, matter and force, positive science knows nothing." (Preface to the Works of Auguste Comte, p. 9.)

very premises, should be logically led to accept the idea of the Supernatural; nevertheless, it is among them that I meet with some of its most determined opponents. Yet they do not deny its theoretical possibility. The very idea which they form of freedom and the whole question of Divine power, does not allow them to make the Creator the slave of His own laws; but this mere possibility, simply and in itself, cannot hold its own against the repugnance of their reason—moulded and influenced by the methods of Positivism—to admit the reality of miraculous facts. Let me say to them that this repugnance is unworthy of philosophic minds, and that only those are truly independent who are able to resist the current of their time.

Here is the favourite argument which they adduce:—They appeal to the general impression produced on our minds by the religious history of mankind; and they tell us that, at their origin, all religions whatsoever present an array of marvellous occurrences; that this claim is utterly inadmissible, from the mere fact that it is universal; and that it merely proves the aberration of the human imagination when over-excited by contemplation of the religious ideal. Moreover, they ask why we ourselves, who instinctively object to accept the legends connected with all the mythologies, demand that an exception should be made in favour of the legends connected with the gospels,—why we claim for Christ what we refuse to the would-be wonder-workers of antiquity or of modern times.

The objection is a specious one. Let us see if it is as conclusive as it claims to be.

It is undeniable that men have always and everywhere believed that if the Deity interposed in their destinies, this interposition ought to reveal itself in actions which would permit mortals, through second causes, to catch a glimpse of the First and Supreme Cause. It is equally certain that this presumption has given birth to a countless number of absurd stories and legends. Must it therefore be false? Here lies the real question.

For my part, I confess that this presumption has very great weight, not merely because it is universal, and because it is extremely unphilosophical to disregard an aspiration that has always arisen within the human heart, but still more because it has a foundation in reason; for, if there be a God, and if this God desires to make Himself known, and to found His kingdom, it seems impossible that He should reveal Himself in any other way than as the Lord of Nature, the Sovereign and Omnipotent Being. To remove the Supernatural from the sphere of religion, because of the aberrations which it has produced, is a resolution unworthy of a serious mind. One might as well abolish prayer, worship, the hope of a future life,—in short, all religion together,—for the simple reason that these exercises of the human soul have frequently been whimsical, extravagant, and sometimes outrageous. However, just as, in this as in everything else, we distinguish between the



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true and the false, between the ideal and its gross perversions, so, in view of the Supernatural facts of the Gospel, so clearly attested by those who first witnessed them, our duty is, not to proceed by arbitrary negations, but to find out if those facts do not reveal an interposition, on the part of God, in human history.

To this important consideration another falls to be added. The study of nature reveals to us, in the whole of creation, what may be called an ascending series. At the bottom is found chaotic matter, regulated, however, by fixed mathematical laws; then, higher, we find life—first vegetative, then endowed with motion and instinct, and then with a conscience, dim at first, but becoming clearer until, in the higher orders of being, it expands in intelligence and morality. But what do you observe at each of these stages? A new manifestation, which is supernatural in relation to the preceding—in other words, which involves new features that the preceding one would have been incapable of producing by its own efforts only. At each of these stages nature is largely modified,—not that the laws by which it is regulated ever cease to exist, but these laws themselves operate under different conditions. The introduction of an animate being into a sphere within which, till then, only physical and chemical operations were performed, brings with it phenomena of a biological kind. Let man, an intelligent and reasonable being, make his appearance on a spot of this earth where only the brutes had been before, and you will see him modify the course of a stream, suspend the operation of destructive forces, graft on a tree a branch which it would not have by any means produced, create a new variety in the animal series by cross-breeding, and, in short, oppose to the downward course of things the marvellous efficacy of his free agency. The reign of man in nature is thus affirmed by the evidence of operations which are really supernatural. In what respect, then, does Christianity contradict the analogy of nature, when, bringing to the world that sublime reality called the Kingdom of God among men, it tells us that this kingdom was announced by new tokens—by incontestable signs which showed that matter ought to be subject to mind and spirit?

To this reason is added a third, still stronger, and, as we think, decisive. Only the most superficial optimist can maintain that nature, as we see it in man, is in its normal and true condition: disorder is everywhere—in the understanding, under the form of error that is sometimes monstrous; in the conscience, under the form of falsehood; in the heart, under the form of selfishness or disorderly affections; and, finally, in the bodily constitution, under the form of sensuality, deformity, or pain. To those who are content to deceive themselves by saying that all is well, suffering humanity replies with its cry of distress. To those who affirm the necessary existence of evil, conscience replies with its shrill protest, while man makes a sad confession of his misery; for the human soul, like the ocean, has its tides—the flow of its crimes,

and the corresponding ebb of remorse. If evil, with us, were merely the inheritance originally derived from an animal nature, we would commit evil naturally ; but man is not one of the brutes, and when he becomes a brute, he descends below the brutes themselves ; he perverts and falsifies nature ; he descends lower than nature, and even goes against it. If, then, the redemption of mankind is to be accomplished, it must be carried out by the restoration of nature as it really was—created in the image of God. What is lower than nature necessarily demands the supernatural.

Now, with regard to that which we call the supernatural in the work of Jesus Christ, what is it, if it be not, above all, the restoration of human nature, and of this nature in its entirety—body and spirit together ? I insist on this word “ body ; ” for Christianity, in opposition to all the religions of the East, and the philosophical systems of antiquity, has never placed the principle of evil in the body, and has professed to sanctify and save the whole man. But how could this restoration of nature have been accomplished by Christ, if He had confined Himself to teaching, if He had not lived a life of active energy, if He had not touched, with His Divine hands, those that were born blind, the demoniacs and the lepers ? What ! you are pleased when, in His discourses, Jesus Christ, protests against the haughty triumph of violence, against the perversions of justice and right, against moral evil under its three forms—sensuality, selfishness, and pride. You feel moved when, in presence of the ruins of God’s work, now so deeply changed, He sets before you the grand outlines of the kingdom of God. In that language you recognise the revelation of religious truth. But by what right, and in virtue of what preconceived idea, will you forbid Him to realise in *deeds* what He proclaims in His words ? Must He, then, remain powerless in the presence of physical suffering, and content Himself with looking, in idle sympathy, on the terrible disease which withers up the leper, on the darkened face of the blind, or on the disordered features which betray the terror and anguish of the wretched demoniac ? Must He stand disarmed in the presence of death ? Must He, in His turn, submit to death, vanquished like all the children of men—throwing down to the world, as His last farewell, an unpractical protest, evoking the bitter and ironical reply of a changeless nature, subject to the endless destiny of evil ? It is not thus, by any means, that Christianity has understood the work of redemption ; it shows us, in Jesus Christ, a being who is truly the Son of Man, subject to all the conditions of humanity ; but a being who, by deed as well as word, reveals to us the interposition of God in the affairs of men ; a being who, ever and everywhere, affirms the supremacy of spirit over matter, of good over evil, and of life over death.

Such is the Christ of the gospels, and of all the gospels ; the Christ of the apostles, and of all the apostles ; the only Christ whose life can be explained without mutilating any of the texts in which it has been

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preserved to us ; the only Christ who has been able to found a Church on earth ; the only Christ whom the heart of believers could ever receive. And yet astonishment is expressed because we make energetic protest against the theories which see in His history merely an incoherent mixture of legend and truth, of moral perfection and suspicious wonders, of Divine grandeur and false miracles, as if it were possible to dismember this living unity, and to make, out of this Divine figure, a collection of shapeless and monstrous elements ! If any one desires to see in Him nothing but a man, or to lop off from His life everything supernatural, he must submit the gospels to the revolutionary processes of arbitrary criticism, whose contradictory solutions leave nothing remaining. It is vain to affirm that this superhuman figure can be confined within the ordinary framework of history ; it always bursts these bounds. For the life and character of Cæsar, Mohammed, Buddha, or Confucius an explanation may be found ; but Jesus Christ admits of none. Do you demand evidence of this ? You have it in the fact that new explanations of that life are for ever being found ; that you who read these lines are satisfied with none of them ; and that every age spends itself in working at this problem, without ever finding a solution. "What have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ?" once exclaimed a demoniac at Capernaum. It is the cry of the human conscience, repeated by each succeeding generation,—overcome alternately by admiration and by the spirit of revolt, changing from worship to blasphemy before this strange figure the perfection of which both attracts and repels, and knowing, by an infallible instinct, stronger than any sophism, that Jesus Christ can be nothing if He is not Lord and King.

EUG. BERSIER.

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## OUR LANCASHIRE STORY.

**A**MONG the counties of England, Lancashire holds quite a position of its own.

Whether we consider its physical features, its people, or its history, we find ourselves among very marked and distinctive peculiarities. Lancashire is a province, in fact, rather than a county.

Springing from a long reach of indented seaboard, with its once dreary levels of sand and marsh, now richly cultivated plains like the district of the Fylde, the land rises by irregular plateaus to the vast centres of mineral and manufacturing industry. Swelling still farther up, into old forest regions like Pendle and Rossendale, or into far-spreading moorlands with their picturesque *cloughs* and valleys, now full enough of unpicturesque factories and chimney-stalks, it loses itself among the bare and bleak but boldly out-lined hills that form the "back-bone" of

England, and that stretch between Lancashire and Yorkshire from Pennygant to the Peak.

The manufactures introduced into Manchester and its neighbourhood by the Flemings, under the auspices of Edward III., laid the foundation of Lancashire's prosperity. Thus, from being a wild and sparsely peopled district, it has become, through its peculiar facilities and suitability for manufacturing pursuits, specially because of its rich coal-measures and its abundant water-power, the first county in the kingdom for population, and all but the first for wealth and general importance.

From the days of John of Gaunt, and earlier, Lancashire has been a Duchy and County Palatine. The son of one king (Edward III.) and the father of another (Henry IV.), this great historical character—the link between the Plantagenets and the House of Lancaster, as well as the ancestor of the Tudor line by a great-granddaughter—fell heir by his wife to the estates and honours that centred in the ducal castle on the Lune, with all its palace rights and privileges, which he transmitted to his son, Henry of Bolingbroke, through whom, as Henry IV., they became inseparably attached to the Crown. Hence the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster remains one of the high offices of State, and the shire boasts of two capitals, Lancaster for the county, and "proud" Preston for the Duchy, as the seat of its administrative courts.

But these towns have been quite outstripped by other great and growing communities in the county, especially by Manchester and Liverpool, both of which have now attained the title and rank of cities—a dignity, it must be allowed, they can wear with easy grace.

Beyond other counties Lancashire has preserved its native dialect, rough and rugged, in harmony with the vigour of the race, vehemently Doric in its sound as the broadest Scotch, and with a vernacular literature which, if often coarse and vulgar, is well worthy of study for its rich humour and pathos, racy of the soil.

Nor has the county been less tenacious of its curious customs and social usages. Its wakes and pastimes, as holiday seasons are still called; its many popular delicacies, Bury-simmels, *i.e.*, semi-lent cakes and the like, carry with them reminiscences of the old rush-bearings and mummings, the morris-dances and egg-pacings, the bid-ales and church-ales which found a congenial home among a strong-willed but kindly people addicted to rough and boisterous mirth and violent sports; not to speak of witch and *boggart* tales, and the other legendary lore with which their popular traditions abound.

To a stranger the independent and self-asserting address of the people may savour of rudeness, but this is soon found to be only bluntness and directness of manner; the Lancashire nature being essentially warm and generous, transparent and true, with more, perhaps, of practical aptitude than of fine susceptibility.

In its religious, as in its general history and life, Lancashire has

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distinctly had ways of its own ; for the temper of the people is by no means obsequious.

Since John of Gaunt stood forward to protect Wicliffe, defending the right to have Scripture in the common tongue, and under cover of the great schism, when Urban and Clement, two Popes at one time, hurled anathemas at each other's head, defying if he could not disendow the Church, Lancashire has been great in antagonism and opposition, never particularly amenable to dictation or control. John Wesley records often in his Journal how unmanageable, even to fierceness, he found the populace of its towns. And going back to medieval times, it would seem that, in connection with what was probably the earliest Christian sanctuary between the Ribble and the Mersey, the "White Church under the Leigh" in ancient Blackburnshire, there flourished, for well nigh 500 years, a succession of *married* priests, in spite of Papal ordinances to the contrary. Strangely enough, the Townleys of Townley, one of the oldest and most respectable Roman Catholic families in the county, trace their pedigree back to that very priesthood.

Nowhere in England have the religious struggles been more protracted than in Lancashire, and nowhere have they attained so much intensity and development. Papist, Prelatist, Puritan, were sharply severed, and became strongly marked. The Puritanism of the county, culminating in an established Presbyterian Church for a time, had its own distinctive features. Nowhere has it left more peculiar traces of its influence than in the hundreds of Salford and Blackburn, which form the north and south-eastern divisions, where it had its strongest hold. A striking instance is the prevailing fondness for Old Testament nomenclature : Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua, Job, Jesse, Samuel, Jeremiah, Zachary ; or Sarah, Leah, Rachel, Hannah, and the like, being still exceedingly common Christian names.

On the other hand, there are districts toward the west and north where the old Romish faith abides in remarkable strength among many ancient families and their tenantry, so that with the influx of Irish into the great manufacturing towns, Lancashire is still, as it has been in the past, the most Roman Catholic county in England. From these and similar causes, the national Established Church has probably less influence, and certainly less hold on the affections of the people in parts of Lancashire than elsewhere through the country.

The Reformation found great difficulty in rooting itself at first. Although the two principal abbeys of the county, Whalley and Furness (in Bekansgill or Vale of Nightshade), unquestionably for ages centres of piety and civilising influence, were abolished prior to the general dissolution of corrupt monasteries, special efforts had to be made by itinerating evangelists, called the king's (or queen's) preachers, to disseminate the new light in Lancashire. Of these the most famous and successful was JOHN BADFORD of Manchester, one of the noblest of



English reformers and martyrs. Another victim of the Marian persecution that Lancashire furnished was GEORGE MARSH, who contributed, with the Bradshaws and Levers, the Hultons and Heywoods, to make Bolton what it came to be afterwards called, "the Geneva of Lancashire." It was to this gracious sufferer Lord Derby made the honest avowal, that "the true religion is the one which has the most good luck." To this gospel of good luck did the third or *great* earl firmly adhere through his long life; and when confiscated property and Church lands could be had cheap, it was practised by more than the Stanleys, if seldom so candidly confessed. Is the doctrine unpopular now? Still, even in the days of Elizabeth, Lancashire continued the most Popish county in the kingdom, and was most fraught with danger to her rule. From policy, therefore, she went much further in favour of Puritanism there than anywhere else. While so many were yielding a very suspicious and merely outward obedience to her measures, she had to depend on the zeal of the thorough-going Puritans to hold the Popish recusants in check. Besides the four itinerating queen's preachers, a monthly lectureship or "prophesying" was set up in the Great Church of Manchester—a building that was the glory of the county—and to further still more effectively the Reformation doctrine, there was established, by order of her Majesty in council, a novel and peculiar system of clerical discipline. A body of five ministers called moderators was appointed to meet on the day of the lecture with the country clergy for examining, directing, or censuring them. The peculiar constitution of Manchester Collegiate Church, with its foundation of warden and fellows, lent itself readily to such an arrangement, especially when the bishop, Chadderton of Chester, himself a Lancashire Puritan, was also warden, and leading Puritan clergy of the neighbourhood were moderators.

This, as Dr. Halley observes,\* was virtually a presbytery or council of the bishop invested with considerable superintending powers, the nearest approach to a local Presbyterian organisation established with royal sanction in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

The success of these measures was unquestionably great in strengthening the hands of the Reformed party in general, and adding to the influence of Puritanism in particular.

We need only adduce the significant fact, by way of illustration, that ere long we find the Collegiate preachership of Manchester, and the three great rectories of the county (Winwick, Wigan, and Middleton), and the three largest vicarages (which had been carved out of the domains of Whalley Abbey), Blackburn, Whalley, and Rochdale, with

\* "Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. i., p. 131, a work to which we are deeply indebted. In common with all interested in historical inquiry, we are also under great obligation to the Chetham Society, Manchester (James Crossley, Esq., President), which has already issued more than a hundred volumes of carefully edited records and other valuable MSS. that shed a flood of light on bygone times in Lancashire.

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their chapelries, all occupied by avowed Puritans, some of them, too, of a very advanced type. No doubt this process received a check in the reign of James, when Popery was rather at a discount; and numbers of the more resolute Puritans were silenced, such as the Midgleys of Rochdale, father and son, the former of whom, Richard Midgley, had been vicar for forty-eight years, and had done a remarkable work in that enormous parish. Through these and similar ejections there sprang up, however, a Puritanism of Nonconformist type, which re-acted on what remained within the Church; the whole becoming more and more pronounced as the reign of the first James drew to a close, and with a tendency to assume an organised Presbyterian form. The insane "Book of Sports" of 1616 contributed to such a result. This "Book" was a royal proclamation that related to Lancashire alone, issued by the king after his notable "progress" through the county, and designed to have all the effect of law. It was prepared by Morton, Bishop of Chester, by command of his Majesty, "the viceregent and representative of God," and was naturally associated in the minds of the more intelligent classes with the new-fangled prelatist, slavish doctrine of the Divine right of kings. Its object was to legalise certain Sunday sports, which it affected to regard as princely boons, from whose benefits it capriciously and pettishly excluded popish recusants, and such Puritans as dropped into church *after* the liturgy, or frequented any other parish church than their own.

When King Charles visited Lancashire in 1633, he found the first "Book" very much a dead letter. He determined, therefore, to re-enforce it, and in doing so extended its provisions to the whole kingdom. Things were gathering darkly around the infatuated king, and this new stretch of the prerogative thickened the clouds in Lancashire.

At this juncture, a remarkable man and leader of men, Richard Heyrick, became warden of Manchester. Never did the unlucky Charles stumble more egregiously for High Churchism than in making this appointment. It came about in the following way:—Sir William Heyrick, of the Exchequer, had privately advanced to the needy and greedy King James a large sum on certain terms, never of course fulfilled. To redeem in some measure his father's broken promise, Charles agreed to let Sir William's son have the reversion of this high and influential office. It was then held by a nominee of King James, a clerical scion of the Athole family, although on hearing him preach from the text, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," he could not help muttering with an oath, as the story goes, "Aye, but the gospel may well be ashamed of thee."

On the retirement of this worthy, Heyrick succeeded to the high post, and a powerful occupant of it he proved, both as a patriot and Puritan. He and the yet more noble, though less imperious Charles Herle, rector of Winwick, the richest benefice reputedly in the north at that

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time, were the most influential supporters of Presbyterianism in the county; both of them able men, highly cultured, and of good family and position, though Herle was the better Presbyterian. They were both preachers to the Houses of Parliament. They were the two that represented Lancashire in the Westminster Assembly, and Herle acquired such influence in its councils as to be chosen Prolocutor on the death of Dr. Twisse.

It was in Winwick Church John Howe received ordination at the hands of Herle and his parochial co-adjutors. Of this event Howe says himself: "There are few ministers whose ordination has been so truly primitive as mine, having been devoted to the sacred office by a primitive bishop and his officiating presbytery."

Heyricke was associated during his wardenship with three remarkable subordinates, all Presbyterians, who followed each other as lecturers in Manchester Collegiate Church. He found the grand old WILLIAM BOURNE wielding great popular pulpit gifts, which told powerfully over a large part of the country. Bourne's chief object was the further reform of the Church of England, and he saw in Presbyterian Constitutional Government the best safeguard against relapse into Popery, and the surest method of self-purifying action in the National Establishment. On his death, Heyricke, who wrought with might and main to realise the same idea, secured the appointment for a man of kindred spirit, RICHARD HOLLINWORTH, whose special gift was "the pen of the ready writer." Then, after a number of years, and in the warden's old age, came Manchester's darling preacher, the pious and earnest HENRY NEWCOME, who was destined to play an important, and withal a noble part in the later ecclesiastical life of the county.\*

In the elections of 1640 for the Long Parliament, Lancashire showed itself decisively opposed to the arbitrary rule of the king and his counsellors. The loyal constitutional party, whose cry was king and parliament, gained a number of seats even in the strongholds of royalism—members of notable Puritan and Presbyterian families being sent up in great force. The ablest and most active leaders were Alexander Rigby, who had managed to wrest one of the seats in "malignant" Wigan, and John Moore in Liverpool, where the old commercial influence of his family had for ages held the balance between the rival houses—the Molineaux of the Castle, who were Romanists, and the Stanleys of the Tower, who were Episcopalian. Speaking roughly, the strength of Puritanism lay in the eastern side of the county, where the Asshetons and other large Presbyterian proprietors had their seats; Episcopacy and Royalism prevailed in the central portion, from Lancaster to Warring-

\* Newcome, like others of his Presbyterian brethren, left behind him some interesting MS. journals. His "Diary," in one volume, and "Autobiography," in two volumes, have been issued by the Chetham Society, as has also the record of another Lancashire Presbyterian minister, Adam Martindale. Richard Hollinworth's "Mancuniensis" (Manchester being the Roman Mancunium) is also a well-known and much-quoted little volume.

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ton; while the gentry along the coast, who were for the most part Papists, sided also chiefly with the king.

The civil war had its commencement in Lancashire, the first blow being given by a Stanley, but whether by the royalist Earl of Lathom House, or Sir Thomas Stanley, the Roundhead (from whom the present Derby family is directly descended), is still a debated question. But the Lancashire war was a separate thing by itself, a wheel working within the main wheel on an axis of its own. Besides the siege of Manchester, which opened the campaign, the chief events were the famous defence of Lathom House by the noble Countess; the awful massacre of Bolton, "the Geneva of Lancashire;" and the execution in that town, years afterwards, by Cromwell's Commission, of the royalist leader, James 7th Earl of Derby. Everything went against the king's party from the very first, so that the "Solemn League and Covenant" was more largely subscribed by parish clergy and influential leaders than in any other English county.

Many circumstances conspired to point out Lancashire as the fittest place, along with London, to make an experimental beginning with the new ecclesiastical regime.

By an ordinance, therefore, of the Long Parliament, dated 2nd October, 1646, and in response to a petition of 12,578 persons—a considerable part of the population in those days—PRESBYTERIAN government and discipline was set up as the ESTABLISHED CHURCH ORDER throughout Lancashire.

Each parish was to have its congregational "classis" or eldership, and was to send not less than two, not more than four, of these lay-representatives along with the minister to the monthly presbyterial "classis," while the higher synodical "classis," or provincial Assembly, was to meet twice a-year at Preston. All the parishes of the county, about sixty in number, besides their subordinate chapelries, were arranged in nine presbyteries—Manchester, Bolton, Blackburn, Warrington, Walton (including Liverpool), Croston, Preston, Lancaster, and, with its own peculiar history, Adlingham, for the detached portion of the county running up through Furness and Cartmel by the Lake of Coniston and the Lancashire shores of Windermere.\*

Such was the form of polity that struggled to obtain a foothold during the next brief but crowded fourteen years. For there *was* a struggle throughout, with untoward circumstances and grave difficulties, administered though it was by able and zealous bodies of clergy, in

\* The minutes of Manchester Presbytery are extant in the Chetham library, and a copied set of the second or Bolton ones may be found in the Bodleian. Those of the other "classes" have apparently perished. A full and authentic account of the whole position is given in a very scarce contemporary tract, "The Deliberate Resolution of the Ministers of the Gospel within the County Palatine of Lancashire, with the grounds and cautions according to which they put into execution the Presbyterian Government. London, 1647."

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conjunction with an ample eldership of "esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen," as the Parliamentary ordinance arranges them.

The sudden rise, and the equally sudden fall, of Presbyterianism in Lancashire, is an instructive page in ecclesiastical history, not without a bearing on many vital interests and burning questions of the present hour. Favoured by only a section of the community, its discipline was, perhaps, unduly pressed on all sorts of parishioners, while they were not, as a whole, prepared for the responsibilities and self-restraint which *representative* Church-government requires. But whatever were its mistakes in this direction, Dr. Halley admits there was; that in Presbyterianism "which, had it not been connected with the civil power, would have secured the confidence and respects of all Protestant Englishmen. Public worship was observed with more order and solemnity than had been previously known in the county. The salutary influence of religious principles was observed diffusing itself among all grades of social life, and elevating the morals of the people."

Why, then, did it snap asunder so quickly? This is the abrupt close of the minute-book of the Manchester "classis," 14th August, 1660: "Mr. Hulme preached according to order. Mr. Harrison, moderator, began with prayer. Mr. Ellison returned his instrument, affixed and subscribed: he hath been examined in divinity, chronology, and ecclesiastical history. He maintained a dispute on the question, *Utrum opera sint causa justificationis vel pars aliqua justitiæ nostræ coram Deo?* and was approved. Mr. Ellison to be ordained at Flixton on Wednesday, 28th inst. Mr. Leigh to preach; Mr. Newcome to give the exhortation; Mr. Walker and Mr. Jones to pray; and Mr. Constantine to pray at the imposition of hands. Mr. Angier, jun., to preach at next class; Mr. Walker to be moderator. Next class to be the second Tuesday of September." But no other "classis" ever met *on the basis of the law of the land*. In Lancashire and elsewhere, associations of ministers under this name were often held, but they were purely voluntary and non-representative, called into use mainly at ordinations.

That it was some intolerance *inherent* in the system which caused its downfall, is a vulgar mistake. The chief explanation of the collapse is to be found in the loss of faith by the Presbyterians themselves in the attainableness of their own ideal. Theirs was a glorious dream, destined to fulfil itself in higher ways than they could foresee. Their grand desire was a constitutional and representative government, working on the same lines, both in Church and in State, throughout the three kingdoms. It had been better for these three kingdoms at this day had they been ripe enough or wise enough for the experiment, laden though it was at the time with the vice of compulsion in matters of religion. For if it aimed at dominance, it was a dominance of no priestly or prelatic type, but was associated with popular methods of local and general *representation*, the essential principle of liberty, and



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the strongest safeguard of the common weal. Their conception was logical and strictly consistent ; if a National Church system is not to be imposed on a dissenting minority, it ceases to be a *National Church* system, and becomes a living lie and self-contradiction. The world, to be sure, is less governed by logic than sentiment, but it bodes nothing but evil when a ruling sentiment gets divorced from logic. When, therefore, the Earl of Manchester and his supporters were driven from power in 1648 by the military party having gained the ascendancy, we need not wonder if the Lancashire Presbyterians grew dubious and lukewarm about their position. Their State Church scheme was a failure, and what of it had been established found itself speedily in collision with the State. The first great occasion was the execution of the king in 1649. Presbyterians everywhere, as reformers, not revolutionists, were strongly, even violently, opposed on principle to this impolitic step, and the beheading of the two Presbyterian noblemen, the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Holland, shortly after, completed the alienation. While the Scotch Presbyterians were hurling themselves in vain against Cromwell, those of Lancashire plotted hard against his military republicanism. Many of their influential ministers, like Heyricke, Hollinworth, Herle, Angier of Denton, Gee of Eccleston, and Harrison of Ashton, were in prison for a time—Heyricke narrowly escaping with his life when his friend Christopher Love fell a victim to his decisive maintenance of the Covenant. Henceforward the Presbyterian establishment had to submit to indignities and humiliating interferences foreign even to the genius of its Erastian constitution. Its property was managed by "sequestrators ;" its Church order was impaired by the encouragement of countless varieties of wild, fanatical sects ; and avowed Independents were planted in some parochial benefices—"independency of State pay and control being," as Dr. Halley himself observes, "no part of the ecclesiastical polity of the early Independents." Disappointment and a sense of isolation conspired with other more patriotic feelings in disposing the Lancashire Presbyterians to aim at a restoration of the monarchy. Under their trusty leader, Sir George Booth, they did much to facilitate the return of the king ; and not quite anticipating the depth of Charles's perfidy, they paid a heavy penalty for putting trust in princes to such an unwarrantable extent ; though Sir George was created Earl of Delamere for his services. "This country is under great obligation to the English Presbyterians," says Halley, "for maintaining its old constitutional liberty at great cost and suffering ; while they resisted the tyranny of Charles I., the military rule which was threatening on the death of Cromwell, and the illegal assertion of prerogative by James II. While to no religious party of that time is England so much indebted as to the Presbyterians, to no Presbyterian family is it more indebted than to the Booths of Dunham Massey." Their descendant bears now the title of Earl of Stamford and Warrington. Other old county families of kindred spirit, devoted to Presbyterian

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principles, were the Asshetons, Hultons, Ashursts, the Hydes and Hollands of Denton (represented now by the Earl of Wilton), and the Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower. These last were the hospitable entertainers of King James on his famous Lancashire "progress;" and though at one time Hoghton Tower had been a noted rendezvous for Jesuits and seminary priests, it continued for long after the Restoration a welcome retreat for godly Presbyterians like Newcome, Ambrose, and Oliver Heywood. The Act of Uniformity completed the havoc previously begun in the Presbyterian Church of Lancashire.

"Nor shall the eternal roll of praise reject  
Those unconfirming; whom one rigorous day  
Drives from their cures, a voluntary prey  
To poverty, and grief, and disrespect,  
And some to want."

WORDSWORTH'S *Ecclesiastical Sketches*.

Or, in the strong words of Locke, "Bartholomew Day was fatal to our (English) Church and religion, in throwing out a very great number of worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines who could not come up to some things in the Act of Uniformity." Of the noble 2000 ejected, Lancashire furnished well-nigh a hundred. Herle, Hollinworth, Gee, and other leaders were gone. Warden Heyricke, now a feeble old man, saw his way, after a deadly struggle, to conform, with a few others afterwards. Among the more distinguished Presbyterian non-conforming clergy in Lancashire parishes, we may mention the truly good and eloquent Henry Newcome of Manchester; John Angier of Denton, with his nephew and curate; John Harrison, rector of Ashton; Robert Bath, vicar of Rochdale, who had actually got the preferment from Archbishop Laud himself on marrying his niece! Isaac Ambrose of Preston and Garstang, the best known of his brethren as a writer of devotional books, full as they are of "pathos and beauty;" John Tilsley, vicar of the famous parish of Dean; Robert Yates, rector of Warrington; Goodwin and Park, of Bolton; Constantine of Oldham; Richard Holbrooke of Salford, Herwicke's son-in-law, who became a physician, like Dr. Marshall of Lancaster and others, to obtain an honourable livelihood; and James Hyett of Croston, who was moderator of the first Provincial Assembly, and able from his large private fortune to be of much service to his poorer brethren.

A number of these Presbyterian ministers were twice ejected for refusing the "engagement" of the Republican Government as well as by the black Bartholomew Act. They became for the most part founders of dissent in their respective towns and neighbourhoods when, after some years, licenses for meeting-places could be legally secured. But after the Act of Uniformity, Presbyterianism was at an end in Lancashire.

The county has become the seat of *two* Presbyteries of late, with at least thirty churches *each*, which have sprung up as the heirs of a noble lineage, but of a newer type, and with higher methods and aims. The

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so-called lapse of Presbyterianism into Arian and Unitarian views has nothing whatever to do with Presbyterianism as a method of ecclesiastical rule. For High Churchmen like Canon Liddon or others to insinuate this is to betray a want of accurate information. The polemical literature and history of the period show that, in Halley's words "the early Unitarians among the Nonconformists were not Presbyterians, as commonly supposed, but Independents or Baptists."

Presbyterian ministers and their congregations were numerous, but they never attempted to revive Presbyterian government and discipline, which indeed the law at first would not allow. The "lapse" is largely a question of congregational trust-deeds and endowments; and a very serious question it is to all whom it may concern.

Recurring for a moment to the noble and suffering Lancashire Presbyterian leaders, that able heresiarch, Taylor of Norwich, afterwards head of Warrington Theological Academy, as if startled in his later days with the growing degeneracy he had helped to initiate, thus casts "a longing, lingering look behind," in his fervid eulogium: "They had the best education England could afford; most of them were excellent scholars; judicious divines; pious, faithful, and laborious ministers; of great zeal for God and religion; undaunted and courageous in their Master's work; keeping close to their people in the worst of times; . . . aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which, it cannot be denied, flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly, they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in prayer, uttered as God enabled them, from the abundance of their hearts and affections; men of Divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. . . . But now, alas! we are pursuing measures which have a manifest tendency to extinguish the light which they kindled, to damp the spirit which they enlivened, and to dissipate and dissolve the societies which they raised and formed! Let my soul for ever be with the souls of these men!"

A. H. DRYSDALE.

## THE MARTYRS OF BOHEMIA.

**B**OHEMIA! sad, heroic land!  
 A dauntless host was thine,  
 With martyr heart and patriot hand,  
 Who poured their blood like wine.  
 They witnessed for the Holy Book  
 And for the blessed Cup;\*  
 To strive—to die—they well might brook,  
 But not to yield them up.

\* The Book and the Cup, the symbols of the Bohemian Church.

*THE MARTYRS OF BOHEMIA.*

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The page, by day hid from the foe,  
 Was oped at dead of night  
 In secret caves—mid wastes of snow,  
 By the red fire's weird light.

They drank of Christ's dear Cup, concealed  
 In forest, glade, and glen,  
 Or bore it round the battle-field  
 To strengthen valiant men.

Brave Church ! like a too early flower  
 Born ere the frosts are fled—  
 Storm-scattered in thy dawning hour—  
 Crushed by the spoiler's tread !

Yet, that long-dried and faded blood  
 Once watering the ground,  
 Still crieth day and night to God,  
 With all-availing sound.

The army of the silver mines,  
 A myriad-voiced throng  
 Call from their cold and hollow shrines  
 "How long, O Lord, how long ?"

And Elbe's waves, still flowing red,\*  
 Recall that day of blood  
 When stabbed and struggling men sank dead,  
 Thrown bound into the flood.

Yes, Leitmeritz ! through ne'er a trace  
 Of that dread day appears,  
 Yet, see ! one pale, appealing face  
 Still looks from out the years !

It is the Burgomaster's child,  
 Spurned from her father's feet ;  
 Her hair is loose, her eyes are wild,  
 Her step with terror fleet.

In vain has been her pleading prayer  
 For the brave friends of truth ;  
 In vain her heart-wrung cries to spare  
 The husband of her youth.

She presses through the armed ranks,  
 And, with a wailing cry,  
 She rushes down the river's banks  
 To rescue him or die.

\* "The Elbe assumes a blood-red tint after heavy showers."

# THE MARTYRS OF BOHEMIA.

19

Round her beloved's form are twined  
The arms too weak to save ;—  
She may not those rough cords unbind ;—  
Both sink beneath the wave.

Once more—a darkness on the gloom—  
A fuller vial poured ;  
Bohemia's noblest flower and bloom  
Fall by the headsman's sword.

All Prague throngs to the "Grosse Ring,"  
To see how Martyrs die,  
In wonder at the song they sing\*—  
The courage in their eye.

Each man has donned his knightly gear,  
As for a royal feast ;  
Death's signal gun smites on their ear,  
But cannot daunt their breast.

"These silver hairs in blood shall lie,"  
One brave old baron saith ;  
"For, trust me, I will rather die  
Than see my country's death.

"I pass to Paradise this day,  
A joyful step and brief !  
No tongue of man shall ever say  
Budowa died of grief."

The foremost cheer their brethren on ;  
"Oh, grudge us not !" they cry ;  
"Your triumph shall be bravely won,  
Though we be first to die.

"Our spirits straight to Christ ascend,  
And to the crownèd throng ;  
Earth's pains and sorrows quickly end,  
But heaven's joys are long."

"God speed !" their waiting comrades say,  
"Good angels guard you home !  
O brothers ! this is life's best day !  
We conquer and we come !"

Romantic Prague ! whoe'er hath stood  
On thy quaint bridge at night,  
And seen thee tower o'er Moldau's flood,  
Steeped in the moon's charmed light,

\* Ps. xliv. For Thy sake we are killed, &c.



Has felt how potent is thy spell  
 Even stranger hearts to ope—  
 Bidding the soul with sadness swell—  
 With sympathy—with hope,

As rise thy great twin-heroes, bound  
 Thy double chain to loose,  
 And thou stand'st with the glory crowned  
 Of Jerome and of Huss.

A. R. COUSIN.

## ALEXANDER COMRIE : HIS LIFE AND WORK IN HOLLAND.

### FIRST PAPER.

**D**URING my visit this summer to the Scottish Highlands, I was astonished to find that the very name of ALEXANDER COMRIE was quite unknown to his own Calvinistic countrymen. I hardly could guess how it came to pass that to none of the large English-speaking Colony that resided with him in the middle of last century in the United Provinces, the thought had ever occurred of communicating to the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain and America the marrow of the treasures of so powerful a mind, and so devout and learned a theologian. Certainly this inexplicable ignorance of one of their best men, specially on the part of the Scottish Churches, ought not, from regard to Christian honour, to be allowed to continue any longer. In order, therefore, to discharge at least a portion of the gratitude which, in common with all unshaken Dutch Christians, I feel for the memory of so faithful a servant of our Lord, I will try to sketch briefly in this journal, first some particulars of his life ; then the important position he held in the conflicts of the Church in his time ; and, finally, the hints he supplies as to how we may get safely through the still more intricate labyrinth of our present theological condition. The excuse that Comrie the Scotchman, after thirty years spent in the Netherlands, found it necessary to make in the Dutch preface to his principal work, must be pressed more strongly by the present writer, who has never had the privilege of enjoying for more than a few days the kind hospitality of his ultramarine friends : "If my words," he said, "are wrongly chosen, or my style may prove incorrect according to the rules of your very different language, your indulgence will excuse an author, who is compelled to drop his mother tongue." \*

\* *Stellige en pract. Werklar van den Heidelb. Catech.*, ed. 1844. Tom. I. Aan den lezer., p. xxiii.

## I. COMRIE'S LIFE.

In the environs of Leyden, the oldest university town of Holland, near the borders of the Rhine, at the bottom of the now drained lake of Harlem, lies the little village of Woubrugge, formerly called the seigniorage of Elsyckerwoude. One night, now more than a century and a-half ago (about 1728), one of the farmers of this parish at a rather late hour observed a tall young man stepping through the gateway and coming up with a firm pace through the yard to his little mansion. In the outward appearance of this unexpected stranger there was nothing ill-omened, nothing menacing, none of those inauspicious features so much dreaded by isolated farmers in night visitors asking for shelter. On the contrary, he had a gentle though firm expression; a quick resolute spirit flashed from his deep eye; his open countenance was the token of a heart that even at the first blush would have invited the confidence of any one but a Dutch peasant. As he came nearer, the farmer went from his window to the doorstep, unbolted the upper half of his door, and bending over the lower part, asked the fellow what he came for so late? The answer to this abrupt question was the humble petition, in somewhat broken Dutch, that he might be allowed to pass the night in the grange as he was quite penniless, and that he wished to be put in the way to Leyden next morning. Our farmer, partly under the impression of his tall, commanding stature, partly struck by his mild voice, felt he could not deny his request, and doing what in a doubtful case like this is always the best way to avoid mistrust,—assented at once, opened his door, and ushered his guest into a little grange, adjacent to his own bedroom, where he could be watched stealthily through a hole in the wall. There he left the candle with him, brought him some bread and milk, and having bid him good night, retired in the dark to his bedroom to watch his movements—not that he thought him a vagrant or rambler, but still his broken Dutch had awakened his suspicion. Fancy his astonishment as he saw the poor wanderer, as soon as he imagined himself alone and unobserved, uncover his head, put off his coat, and, falling on his knees, pour out his soul in a touching, fervent prayer to the Lord, giving thanks for his guidance, and for the kindness he had met with. During his prayer, there rose such a holy expression from the young man's face that the farmer already felt quite ashamed of his unfavourable conjectures—a change of opinion ending in making him feel himself entirely his inferior, as, placing his ear once more to the hole, he heard the lad pleading most earnestly and fervently before the Throne of Grace, that if his entertainer might not be as yet converted to eternal life, the Divine mercy might be bestowed upon him also and upon his family. This was too much for the listener. It seemed to him as a vision from heaven. Was this “to entertain angels unawares”? Was this stranger a messenger from above? He did not dare to decide, but surely a message from above had come

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to his heart. Struck by surprise and admiration he left the hole, dropped the curtain, and, approaching his bedstead, fell on his knees, and humbling his heart before the Lord, felt as if the prayer of the young stranger had been granted already—such joy and celestial happiness came into his soul. This was the first conversion that Comrie made in the village of his future ministry.\*

To understand this, the reader should know that Woubrugge just a little before the time of Comrie's visit had been the scene of a very remarkable revival. There had been in this village for years and years, as Comrie himself afterwards told, nothing but a dead outward show of religion; there was much orthodoxy and even knowledge leading to a historical faith, but the power of the Lord was not manifested, the operation of the Holy Spirit did not show itself. It was the stillness of the tomb, not the sparkling of life and the beaming of light such as should be in a Christian community. But then there came from Benthuyzen, a little place two hours off, a God-fearing workman, who had been brought to know of the resurrection-power of Christ by the faithful ministry of Van Noorden, a father in Christ for the whole neighbourhood. This plain workman felt as if the Lord had bound the whole village of Woubrugge upon his heart. He tried by every means to rouse the people from their lethargy, stirred up young and old to abandon their false trust, and never ceased to carry the souls of all around him before the Throne of Divine Mercy in his prayers. Thus he went on for eight years, but without the least shadow of success, till finally, after nine years of quiet waiting, the Lord came down to answer his petition: now the seed had ripened, and Klaas Jansse Poldervaert—such was his name—hardly knew how to satisfy all the demands for spiritual direction that came to him day by day from different quarters of the parish. So prominent and striking did this work of the Lord then appear, that many came up every Sunday from different places in the neighbourhood to witness the outpouring of spiritual blessing. And although the Rev. Mr. Blom, minister of the parish at that time, at first began by opposing the movement as throwing his ministry into the shade, still the revival proved so general and so continuous, and maintained such a high character, that he finally gave way, became a partaker of the unspeakable blessing for his own soul, and until his death in 1734, bore public testimony from the pulpit to the great and glorious work the Lord had done in his parish in his days, though without his instrumentality.†

I have called this revival remarkable, first on account of the long time it took for rooting itself—a preparatory period of nine years—so very different from the sudden movements of our own days. It was remarkable also, because it brought to the Cross not a wild and worldly population, but a company of strictly orthodox and outwardly blameless

\* Private information.

† COMRIE, *Lykrede op den Heer van Schellingerwoude*. Ed. 1749, p. 25.

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parishioners. It was even more remarkable for the sound character it assumed from the beginning and maintained to the last, as described by Comrie in these terms: "The work of the Lord in our village was such that all the really converted people, who got the sealing of the Spirit, were constantly moving around the Mediator as their common centre, rejecting everything besides the Surety Himself."\* And certainly, no one who is acquainted with the secrets of the human heart will think it strange, that under such circumstances, and in a spiritual atmosphere such as this, a man like our farmer, who, perhaps, had been for a long time "kicking against the pricks," became so strongly impressed by the sight of this praying wanderer, that the ice in his soul melted, and the waters began to flow.

The meeting of the two men, as early next morning as the time of the year permitted, does not require a detailed account. Brought so wonderfully together, they now for the first time found themselves face to face before the Lord, who had so evidently guided Comrie's steps, and had been working still more manifestly in the heart of his suspicious entertainer. The farmer could not refrain from telling all that had happened; he acknowledged his mistrust, confessed his culpable reluctance to the Book, glorified the power of grace, and rejoiced in his unspeakable happiness. All this was mingled with the warmest expressions of his thankfulness towards the young man whose presence and prayer had acted so forcibly upon him, and who now, quite embarrassed by this outpouring of gratitude, which was the more repugnant to his sensitive nature as his influence upon the farmer's mind had been quite unconscious, felt a sensible relief, as the peasant finally stopped the ebullition of his emotions, and somewhat suddenly apostrophised his guest by the rather peremptory question—"And you, sir, I almost forgot to ask, who you are, and why came you here?"

"My dear friend,"—Comrie replied—"well, of course, I came down to Woubrugge to witness the work of the Lord in this neighbourhood. I am not a native: I am Scotch. My name is Alexander Comrie. I was born the 16th December, 1708,† and three years ago was sent to Amsterdam to a merchant. My parents, who died since, gave me a careful education, at first intending that I should study for the ministry; but my father, afterwards changing his mind, to my great disappointment, thought commerce would suit me better, and hoping that the distraction of a large foreign town would soon overcome my predilection for the pulpit, sent me to your capital. There I was placed as an apprentice, and so I passed three dull and lonely years in the narrow office of my employer,‡ till, some weeks ago, at church I made

\* *Ibidem*, p. 27.

† *Ibid.*, p. 25, cf. Steven's "History of the Scottish Church at Rotterdam," p. 198.

‡ The *A B C des Geloofs*, ed. 4<sup>e</sup>, p. 106, makes it almost evident, that Comrie was still in Edinburgh in 1724. He went to Groningen in 1729. Therefore, taking one year for his preparatory studies, the interesting scene at Woubrugge must have occurred in 1728, his arrival at Amsterdam about 1724-25, giving for his office-life three years.

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the acquaintance of a godly old man, who told me of what was going on in the Rhine villages, and encouraged me to go and judge for myself. So, the first holidays I could get, I embarked for Benthuisen; but after some hours' sailing on the lake the wind became so violent, that our barge was cast ashore and almost shattered. I myself had but a narrow escape as I tried to swim towards the coast, and, with the loss of my bag, was obliged to walk on in the dark, till I saw the light of your lamp, inducing me to make an appeal to your hospitality. How happy," he added, "and how glorious was all this, and how kindly the Lord guided me to make me find such a friendly heart, and to bring such a blessing to you. Oh, may it prove an *eternal* blessing! And if it is not asking too much, would you allow me to stay here now a couple of days? and would you be so kind as to introduce me to some of the pious people of the village?"

This request, of course, was granted at once, and before noon the farmer went with Comrie to the house of his landlord, Arnold de Sterke, in whom, conjointly with Cornelius van Schellingerwoude, the seignior of the village had been vested by purchase some years before. Both these gentlemen had joined in the spiritual movement among their tenants. In Van Schellingerwoude's family, six out of his eight children had come to a full possession of grace; and our farmer, anxious to cheer his landlord by the glad tidings of the change that had taken place in his inward life, and knowing the interest he always took in able, pious young men, felt quite sure of meeting with a hearty welcome, as he stepped over the threshold of the old manor. Mr. de Sterke, indeed, listened with evident interest and a smile on his mild face, as he attended to his farmer's narrative; expressed his gladness at the good news, then turning to his tall, fine-looking companion, was soon lost in a long conversation regarding the state of the Church in Scotland, the position which the stranger occupied at Amsterdam, his former studies at the Latin School, and his prospects for the future. "Such a staunch fellow would do for the ministry!" said Mr. de Sterke to himself. "What a pity that such a capital young man should bury his talents in an office." And as Comrie repeated his strong desire to serve the Lord in his Church, and could scarcely conceal the dislike, not to say disgust, which office-work provoked in him, Mr. de Sterke at once ordered his carriage, and intimated to the farmer his intention of taking the young Scotchman along with him to Woerden. The minister of this place at that time was the Rev. Antonius Tarre, a cousin to Mr. de Sterke, who was bound to him by the double tie of relationship and spiritual sympathy; and it was with this excellent clergyman that Mr. de Sterke desired to deliberate upon the possibility of sending Comrie to the University. Mr. Tarre at once formed the same favourable impression of the young man's character and sincere piety, and after a short examination, came without the least hesitation to the conclusion that his intellectual talents were



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anything but common, and his knowledge of the classics, to say the least, far from insignificant. This satisfactory result confirmed Mr. de Sterke in his first intention; and on finding in Mr. Tarre the same willingness to help, both gentlemen soon came to the conclusion that Comrie, if he desired, should leave his office at once, resume his classics, and after a year's preparation, be sent to a University.

Comrie, as might be expected, embraced this proposal with his whole heart, thanked his benefactors most warmly, and, according to a report, resting, however, on mere tradition, solemnly promised that, in case their bursary should prove the means of bringing him into the ministry, he would remain at the disposal of the Woubrugian Church as long as the Lord granted him life and strength.

By the 8th September of the following year, this scheme had already been carried so far, that Comrie could matriculate at Groningen, the rector who enrolled him in the *album discipulorum* being Professor Michael Rossall.\* No doubt the great attractions of Groningen at that time, even over those of Leyden, were the two professors of theology, Antonius van Driessen and Cornelius van Velsen, the valiant opponents of Roell's errors and Venema's laxity.† But besides attending the specifically theological lectures of these two professors, he applied his mind at the same time to the study of philosophy and law, as the two indispensable complements of a solid ministerial training. To the study of law he was introduced by Professor Johannes Barbeyracius, and to that of philosophy by Filburg and Rossall.‡ He remained at Groningen nearly four years, and then went to Leyden, where he was entered in the register on the 10th of July of 1733. Here he attended Burmann's lectures on law, the lectures of Taco Hajo van den Honert and Johannes Wessel on systematical theology, Schulten's on Hebrew, and more especially the great Gravensande's lectures on philosophy. The last mentioned apparently exercised the strongest influence upon him, and even succeeded in persuading him to take his degrees, not in theology, but in philosophy. Accordingly, on the 5th October, 1734, Comrie was created Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy, after the public delivery in the great hall of a treatise entitled, "*Dissertatio de moralitatis fundamento et natura virtutis*,"—"On the basis of morality and the nature of virtue."

It so happened that, when Comrie took his double degree, the parish of Woubrugge had been vacant for more than three months, through the death, in July, of the Rev. Carolus Blom. Such a vacancy occurring just at the moment when Comrie reached the end of his studies, could not fail to produce an impression both upon the kirk-session and upon the lords of the manor, that the pulpit had been rendered

\* The *album discipulorum* of the Groningen University has been published in the "Students' Almanac" of the year 1857.

† Cf., *Brief over de rechtvaar digmaking*, p. 118.

‡ *Brief*, p. 118.

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vacant that it might be filled by him. The kirk-session, therefore, did not hesitate for a moment, and, as soon as Comrie had taken license, with the consent of both the patrons (M. de Sterke and M. van Esslingerwoude, who merely stipulated, for form's sake, for a reservation of their right\*), our young Scotch theologian was elected and duly nominated minister of the parish. The patent of this call was despatched as early as February, 1735. Comrie, mindful of the promise given to his benefactors, accepted it loyally, and soon afterwards, upon the 1st of May, was inducted to his office by the most congenial among his friends, his truly *fides Achates*, and afterwards companion in his theological contests, the Rev. Nic. Holtius, minister of Kouderkerk, near Leyden. For the text of his first sermon he took Zech. vi. 15, "And they that are far off shall come and build the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me."† This election to Woubrugge by the kirk-session, properly speaking, nearly concludes all that we know of Comrie's biography. He became minister of Woubrugge; he never was anything besides; and he did not leave his church till the end of his days was evidently approaching. In the Spring of 1773 his weak health *forced* him to withdraw. Not that he was not desired by other congregations. On the contrary, one after another, the churches of Kralingen, of Naarden, of Schoonhoven, of Bommel, and finally of Steenwyk, were most anxious to avail themselves of his services; the Scottish Church of Rotterdam, served at that time by the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Comrie's personal friend, also put him on the so-called short leet.‡ But Comrie did not move; he felt obliged to refuse these calls, one after another, and kept faithfully and devotedly to the church of his first love. Woubrugge was the "field white for harvest" pointed out to him by the Lord in such a remarkable way; it was the advanced post entrusted to his unparalleled valour; here Comrie determined to stand to the end in the power of his heavenly Captain,—the sword in the one hand and the trowel in the other.

And this simple fact, though apparently insignificant, proved afterwards to have exercised the greatest influence on his character, on his studies, and through the channel of these studies even upon the future of our whole Church. His remaining all his life in the same parish impressed upon his character that mark of unity which is so great an element of mental strength. His living all his days in the centre of such a remarkable revival kept him from withering, and imbued all his writings with the soft, spiritual flavour of Divine grace. His being obliged to expound continually the deepest mysteries of the Gospel to the plainest kind of people, induced him to adopt a style exactly fitted to preserve the knowledge of the truth amongst our peasants, when the

\* Cf. *Bachiene, Kerkely ke Geographie*, ii. p. 80.

† *Boekzaal der gel. wereld*, p. 617. 1735.

‡ Steven, o. l., p. 161.

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higher classes were to be swept away by the mighty stream of rationalism. And (what still more peculiarly deserves our attention) the fact of his being found in such an atmosphere imbued his theology with that vital power by which all genuine theology differs from religious science—a power descending from Christ into the heart of His people; and manifesting itself through His people in every living congregation. The unconscious influence of these happy congregations reacted upon the heart and mind of exceptional scholars like Comrie, to whom the Lord committed the solemn task of restoring once more the true signature imprinted by His own hand on the science of His mysteries.

Our knowledge of the further particulars of Comrie's private life, and the exercise of his ministry during this long period of almost half-a-century, is but scanty. To four points I beg to direct attention.

*First*, Comrie's life was a very lonely one. He married, in 1736, Miss Johanna de Heyde, a lady of rare piety, whose brother, the Rev. Jan Willem de Heyde, was a favourite preacher at Rotterdam; but as early as 1738 the Lord took her from him;\* and he never married again. He had but one daughter, of whom we know absolutely nothing. Hence, it may be said that Comrie's life, destitute of all attractions, and deprived of the charm of a happy home, was divided between his study and his church.

*Secondly*, It seems worth noticing that Comrie was quite free from the miserable curse of clericalism. The thought of overruling others, or of domineering over the spiritual life of his parishioners, awoke his disgust. And so far was he from thinking himself as alone fit for speaking, that on the contrary, he encouraged lay-preaching, by inducing his kirk-session to issue a patent for public teaching to one of the lords of the manor connected with his congregation.†

*Thirdly*, Comrie was specially powerful in his prayers; and as his first prayer in the grange had been the means of touching the farmer's conscience, so it is related, that a great deal of the spiritual direction he gave to his congregation was due to the unction and the depth of his public prayers. As a specially remarkable fact, we are told that at one time the quiet village was suddenly alarmed by five or six successive cases of incendiarism; next Sunday the incendiary himself being at church, was brought to public confession and full repentance by the fascinating and touching tone in which Comrie pled before the Lord, not *against* him, but *for* the salvation of his soul.

In the last place, his mode of visiting his parishioners at their homes was quite different from that of others. He hated that superficial, almost mechanical, habit of running through the village several times a-year, and stepping into house after house, and walking out in a minute. Comrie's visits were rarer; but when he came it was for hours, and with the clear intention and real purpose to do *a work*

\* *A B C des Geloofs*, see the preface. Published in 1739.

† *Lijfhrede*, p. 34.

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in that house, for the spiritual benefit of all its occupants, parents, children, and servants; and in such a case he never bade his people adieu before he had brought about quite a change in their mutual relations, and felt sure that he had left behind him the peace and the consolation of his heavenly Master.

So Comrie's life went calmly on, in the scrupulous and faithful discharge of his ecclesiastical duty. All the time of his ministry he made the little church of Woubrugge the centre of a spiritual movement widely spread and extensively blessed. From miles and miles in the neighbourhood, all God-fearing people came to hear this godly man. And when he left his manse on the 4th of April, 1773,\* to spend the rest of his life in Gouda, Woubrugge and all its environs felt that in Comrie there had been granted to the Reformed Church a great man before the Lord, not only for Rhineland, but the whole United Provinces; a man not likely to be soon forgotten or easily replaced.

For a few months only was he to enjoy the sweet rest of retirement from office. His health had been already broken before he left his favourite village; and his weakness, as often happens, was soon aggravated by the want of his usual employment. Before the next year had reached its close, on the 10th of December, 1774, Comrie was borne away to the heavenly mansions, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, sweetly resting his wearied soul on the bosom of his Saviour.

In accordance with his wishes, his burial was conducted in the simplest way. Not even an inscription was to indicate his tombstone in that huge cathedral of Gouda, no doubt known to many of our readers for its uncommonly beautiful glass paintings. In his will he had expressly stipulated that no biographical notice should be entered in the Church Review after his death—so averse was he to all glorification of the creature, and to the vanity of human pomp.† And though we cannot but regret that, owing to this sober-mindedness, we are left in perfect ignorance of the further particulars of his life, still we submit not unwillingly to this deeply-felt want, glad as we are to find in Comrie once more the image of a genuine Calvinist,—one who showed his detestation of all glorification of the creature, not merely in his sermons, but more severely still in what concerned his own life.

An ill-advised sonneteer nevertheless violated his memory by composing a quatrain in commemoration of his death, telling us in the style of the time, that “though Alexander the Macedonian king was named the Great on account of the subjugation of Asia by his sword, our Alexander, the Scotch theologian, had a still better title to such eulogy, as he had conquered by his pen the hostile powers of hell and

\* *Boekk. der geleerde wereld*, 1773, p. 476. His last words were upon 1 John ii. 24: “Let that abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning.”

† *Boekk. der gel. wereld*, 1774, p. 778.

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Satan."\* The lines are certainly neither soberly expressed nor at all congenial to a mind like Comrie's. And yet the seemingly exaggerated words proved literally true for generation after generation to our pious Dutch farmers, from whom the Macedonian king continued to be veiled by a perpetual eclipse, but who handed down to their children and grandchildren the name of Alexander Comrie, the Scotchman, as of the man of God whose sound and penetrating exposition of the truth had overcome the power of Satan in the hearts of their parents, and in their own.†

In another paper we will speak of Comrie's share in the great theological conflict of his time.

A. KUYPER.

## THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE OF AMERICA.‡

THERE was a time—and it lies not so very far behind us—when people on the Continent of Europe thought they might speak of American theological literature with about equal reason as of Polynesian or Sublunarian. The New World had remained, for the Old one, particularly in this domain, an almost unknown land; and if the people were seeking light and life for Church and theology, it was certainly not to the West that they preferred to direct their glance. This, however, has changed, specially during the second half of the century, and the change is becoming daily more apparent. Without seeking to make an unqualified application of the well-known saying, "Westward the star of empire takes its way," to the path of development for the

\* *Ibidem*, p. 779 :—

"Werd Macedonien's vorst met recht genoemd de groote,  
Omdat gansch Asien zijn scepter hulde bood  
Deez' Alexander, in het sombere graf besloten,  
Was groeter, want zijn pen verwon en hel en dood."

† In compiling these biographical notes, I have been left entirely to my own researches. By advertisement I asked for private information, if such could be got, from old people whose parents or relations had known Comrie personally. This step proved not unsuccessful, as might be seen by comparing the above with short notes on Comrie to be found in *Van der Aa, Biographisch woordenboek, in voce*; in *Ypey en Dermout, Gesch der Ned. Herv. kerk*, t. iii. p. 485-497, and notes, p. 226 seq.; GLASIUS, *Godgel Nederland*, 1, p. 302. Besides what was obtained by private information, I found some particulars in STEVEN, "History of the Scottish Church at Rotterdam," Edinburgh, 1852; the rolls of students of Leyden and Groningen; his own *Lykrede op den Heer van Schellingerwoude*; his preface to his *A B C des Geloofs*; and his Latin treatise upon the "Nature of Virtue." DE CHALMOT, *Biogr. vondenboek, in voce*, and VAN ABCOUDE, *Naamregister van Ned. Boeken*, may also be consulted.

‡ This notice, of which the preparation and contribution were delayed by circumstances, may be regarded as to some extent an appendix to my report on the "Conflict between Faith and Rationalism in Holland," read at Philadelphia, and printed in the "Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance."



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kingdom of God, we must gladly recognise the fact that on yonder side of the ocean there shine, in the firmament of Church and theology, stars worthy in every respect of attention. The increased community of nations has brought, in ever greater numbers, American theologians to Europe, and European theologians to New England in particular. While the evangelical theological literature of America—so far as it yet existed—had displayed at first a preponderantly English or Scottish character, by degrees other layers too were engrafted upon the youthful and promising stock. Cognisance was taken with growing interest of that which the Church and theology of Germany and Holland, France and Switzerland, had to afford. The practical insight of the Americans led them very soon to perceive how many a fruit of the science and faith of the Old World there was from which the New World too might profit.

In this way, for example, it came to pass that, under the influence and guidance of a highly-gifted man like Dr. Philip Schaff, an Anglo-American edition of LANGE'S "BIBELWERK" could appear, having been completed within a few years,—an edition which may be termed not only a translation, but also a complement, and which redounds to the no small honour of the select circle of collaborateurs with the theologian mentioned, as well as to the abundant blessing of some thousands in the United States.

In compliance with a request which has reached me, I now enter upon the review of certain American volumes kindly forwarded to me, which appear to me in every respect worthy the attention of Christian Reformed ministers and members in this country. I open the series with—

"A Manual of the Reformed Church in America, formerly Reformed Protestant Dutch Church (1628-1878), by E. T. Corwin, D.D.\*

He who has read the "Six Months in America" of our ever-to-be-remembered M. Cohen Stuart has not yet forgotten the account of his impressions and experiences in connection with visits to countrymen and congregations of those who, in the seventeenth, and, alas! also in the first half of the nineteenth century, went there to seek freedom and quiet to serve God in accordance with the dictate of their consciences. New Amsterdam, Michigan, Chicago, Iowa, Pella,—what memories for the heart of the Christian Netherlander are attached to these, and so many another name! Rightly did the "Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America" (the earlier official name, *Reformed Dutch Church*, has entirely disappeared since 1867) perceive that an historic statistical review of its past and present would be a worthy festival gift in connection with the solemn observance of the two hundred and fiftieth year of its existence (21st Nov., 1878), capable of awakening interest, not within a narrow circle alone. No effort, therefore, has been spared to make this "Manual," the drawing up of which was entrusted to a skilful hand, as perfect and clear as possible. It con-

\* Third Edition. New York.

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tains the record of a history—in many respects a touching history of suffering and conflict—during two and a-half centuries (1628-1878), based on authentic documents, beginning with the remarkable letter of the venerable founder of the Church, Jonas Michaëlius, to his Amsterdam colleague, Andr. Smoutius, wherein the spiritual relation of the colony to the mother country is at once unequivocally expressed. The book affords a general history of this Church through its different periods; besides this, a full biographical report of about three hundred preachers who have served it in the Gospel; and finally, a sketch of the principal church edifices of earlier and later time, illustrated by a number of woodcuts, and enriched by a suggestive dissertation on Protestant Church architecture in North America, prepared expressly for this Manual by Professor Doolittle, of New Brunswick.

A yet higher ornament is derived from a series of steel engravings, portraits of the leading men who in this part of the vineyard have borne the burden and heat of the day, and whose picture, albeit the likeness is not over flattering, displays many a striking trait of Christian aristocracy and nobility of soul. But this bulky volume still finds its highest recommendation in its solid contents, with which you are ever impressed afresh, notwithstanding all the chronicle-like sobriety of the form. For it places you in a position to follow these men of faith and power, almost step by step, from the time of their first arising in the New World. We see here the Dutch Reformed Church in America, established upon extremely modest foundations, becoming great from small beginnings, and follow it very soon until its struggle for independence against the English Government, which seeks to organise it after the Episcopal system. We see it emerge victorious out of this struggle, preserve its fidelity to ancestral tradition, gradually extend its domain and operations in the sphere alike of outer and inner missions, and receive with open arms the fellow-countrymen and companions in the faith, who were later led to emigrate, in consequence of the separation of 1834. We are made to witness how the different arrangements for higher instruction serve the Church in good stead in the midst of various difficulties, being favoured and extended by means of a readiness for sacrifice such as is displayed to the same extent nowhere outside of the New World; Rutgers College, with its significant symbol, reminding of the legend of the Utrecht Academy: "*Sol Justitiæ, et Occidentem illustra*;" New Brunswick, with its rich endowments and fine library, and the like. But we behold at the same time the growing contest in the domain of language, amidst which the Dutch in preaching and teaching is daily more pushed aside by the English, without any great change in doctrine and life ensuing on that account. On the contrary, the doctrine remains in the main true to the old Calvinistic type, and the conflict which is here waged, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has reference much less to the confession, than to the organisation of the Church. Even there, however, it is evident that the battle

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turned upon that which was regarded as nothing less than a vital principle, and we are ever anew put to shame by examples of unresting zeal, and refreshed by those of ardent piety. When we add to this that the biographical portion contains likewise a considerable number of biographic notices, a knowledge of which is not very easily obtained elsewhere ; that the whole Amsterdam correspondence, extending from 1628 to 1792, consisting of more than a thousand letters and documents, has been carefully examined with a view to the author's design, and that with regard to a number of disputed or uncertain particulars, the trouble of an examination on the spot has been by no means shirked, we shall then appreciate the honest labour, devoted to the due elucidation of an important portion of the Church history of the Fatherland by these Neo-Americans.

May this simple notice—intentionally couched in moderate language—contribute its part to gain from among strangers friends for the book. A church with such a remarkable past, and such a comparatively vigorous present, has surely also still a future, particularly if it does not isolate itself.

Against this latter course, even the appearing and still more the contents and tendency of the second considerable volume from abroad, now lying on our table, emphatically warns. It was sent us "by the Philadelphia Business Committee of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, 1880," contains in solid binding no fewer than 1154 pages large 8vo, for the most part printed in very small type, and bears the title, "Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880." Only a single word on the Union itself, which gives in this collection a manifest sign of life, and has chosen as its significant symbol the seven-armed golden candlestick with the inscription beneath it, "*Lampades multæ, una lux.*" It aims at expressing and advancing the mutual fellowship of the Churches of the Reformation, disseminated throughout the world, who are attached to the Presbyterian system ; and opens its membership to every congregation which, organised on the Presbyterian principle, regards the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the supreme authority in the province of doctrine and of life, and harmonises in its confession with the *consensus* of that which is acknowledged and confessed by all ; whatever in other respects its peculiar characteristic.

The Second General Council, convened at Philadelphia September, 1880, and received in the city of William Penn with genuine American hospitality, bore, so to speak, a truly œcumenical character, and one here receives an ample and exact report of all that was said and done. The Reformed Churches, of by far the majority of lands in the Old and New World, were represented by delegates ; Holland and Hungary were the only lands of Europe whose delegates were conspicuous by their absence.

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One cannot easily find stowed away within the same compass so much that is of interest, with regard to all kinds of questions of the day in the ecclesiastical and theological domain, as in this bulky and important collection. Touching some little known ecclesiastical conditions, we gain here accurate statistical information, and questions of a high degree of importance for every Christian heart are here looked in the face with courageous earnestness. Notably to the cause of missions, regarded not merely from a special churchly, but also from a general Christian point of view, a great measure of attention has been devoted; and in like manner when more definite, dogmatic, and practical ecclesiastical and social questions come on for discussion, the influence of the spirit of evangelical catholicity was not to be ignored. It is impossible to speak of everything which would otherwise demand special mention, such, *e.g.*, as the dissertation of E. de Pressensé, on the requirements of Christian apologetics in accordance with the needs of our time; that of Professor Krafft, of Bonn, on the conflict of the present day between the Papal See and the German Empire; that of Pfeleiderer, on the present condition of religion and Church in Germany, and others. Altogether this collection, as regards diversity and harmony of contents, is not inferior to that of the proceedings of the Evangelical Alliance at New York or Basle. A pity only that, owing to the almost entire absence of sufficient tables of contents, indexes, &c., it is very difficult in this book, so full of matter, to find one's way, as it were, at a glance. One can nowhere obtain a general survey of the whole, and sometimes has to seek long for that which one wishes to know at the moment. On the other hand, the eye is ever agreeably surprised by the well-taken impression, in colours, of several seals, mottoes, &c., of the Reformed Churches in various lands, elucidated by very eloquent names and monograms, by means of which a certain monumental character is imparted to this whole publication. The *Lux lucet in tenebris*, *Ardens sed virens*, *Eendracht maakt macht*, *Nec tamen consumebatur*, *Post tenebras Lux*, and others stand here, even upon the cover, in brotherly unity, poetically and prophetically side by side.

Will the unity here expressed be an enduring one, and at the same time sufficient for the attaining of the end proposed? This question, already natural in itself, acquires enhanced importance when one considers that at Philadelphia the question was mooted, with a view if possible to receive its decision at the next assembly—whether or not it is desirable to draw up a *consensus*, expressing the unity of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Churches represented in that Congress, and, if so, in what sense and to what extent?

The question, indeed, which has been raised at Philadelphia, is only the expression of a longing desire which at the present time occupies the hearts and heads in a number of Churches and circles. In presence of the terrible crisis which the Christian Church is called to pass through

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in our day, it is easily comprehensible that she should recall to mind her historic past, and that many a one should endeavour to escape the entanglement and confusion of the moment by an unconditional return to the ancient confessions, and seek the recovery of the Church by means of the restoration of the past. It is not here the place expressly to deal either with the light side or the shadow-side of such endeavour; but this much is at once self-evident, that in connection with this state of things the thorough study of symbolics becomes of augmented importance for Church and theology. For many a one is certainly zealous for or against the formularies of Unity, without his ever having fully mastered their import; or though he be no stranger in the symbols of his own Church, those of other Churches are and remain to him a *terra incognita*. And yet of these latter, too, the knowledge is indispensable, particularly for the theologian, since he who is in ignorance regarding the confessional peculiarity of other ecclesiastical communities, cannot possibly appreciate, on good grounds and in due proportion, those of his own. But where does one find combined all, without exception, which deserves to be consulted and compared in connection with such an investigation? Who will place me in the true position for taking due cognisance alike of the abundant diversity as well as the higher unity in the symbols of earlier and later days? This question now finds its answer in the third and last of the products of American theological literature, to which we have proposed to direct attention in this article. We mean:

"The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes. By Philip Schaff. In three volumes."\*

Assuredly, if there is anywhere room to speak of "Standard Works" in the theological domain, then this *Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis* is one the like of which does not often appear. It is literally a book for Christian theologians of all Churches and lands, and while the idea of such a work was in itself a happy and seasonable one, the execution could hardly have been entrusted to better hands than those of Dr. Schaff, the theologian already advancing in years, yet ever fresh and inwardly young, who combines the German scientific spirit with the American spirit of enterprise; the historic theologian, cordially attached to the confession of the Evangelical Protestant Churches, but yet kindly in heart and liberal in mind towards those of other opinions; man of the Evangelical Alliance, with its fair ideals, but one who at the same time comprehends the demands of the many-coloured reality. By reason of his extensive historic studies, perfectly at home in the domain of ecclesiastical symbolics also, it could not escape his attention that while various more or less satisfactory editions of the confessional writings of different Churches and denominations existed, there was still wanting such a collection of all these as should satisfy reasonable requirements. Convinced of the scientific importance and practical

\* Third Edition, 1881.



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utility of such a collection, he did not hesitate himself to put his hand to this much-embracing labour, and the issue shows that he has not miscalculated. Notwithstanding their great compass and high price, these three splendidly executed volumes have already attained to a third edition within little more than three years, and, specially in England and America, have found their way to thousands of studies. They contain, indeed, literally everything which has been officially presented by the Christian Church of the East and the West in the province of the *Credo*, and furnish therein an admirable aid for the study of comparative theology, symbolics, polemics, irenics. Particularly in a land like America, where there is a concourse of the members of almost every possible denomination, this study merits, in his opinion, more attention than is ordinarily bestowed on it. But, we ask, can that which is desirable in America be regarded as superfluous elsewhere? We desire therefore to fix the attention in our own land also upon a work already greeted with warm enthusiasm by the periodical press of England, Scotland, and North America, and in Germany received by theologians such as Dorner, of Berlin, in the *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, with high encomium. We afford at least a glance into the treasure chamber here opened.

This work is divided into two main parts—the *History* and the *Collection* of the Records, which now merit attention. To the former of these the first volume is devoted; to the latter the second and third.

He who attentively surveys the whole will readily understand that it has been received by many both within and outside of America not only with gratitude, but even with enthusiasm. *Exegit monumentum ære perennius* says one of his first reviewers concerning the author, while another adds, in a tone of confidence: "Old Europe has not such a book as the *Credentials of Christendom*." It is true the material was in great part ready, but only to a master-hand like that of Schaff could it be easy to dispose of it in such manner. Evidently the author has not approached his task without careful preparatory study, and the extended list of historic and critical literature at the head of many a sub-division shows that he has not neglected to seek light wherever he might hope to find it. We admit that the literature is by no means complete on every point; as regards our symbols—*e.g.*, we meet with the name of Doedes, mentioned even with warm commendation; in connection with the Remonstrants, that of J. Tideman; but that, on the other hand, which has been done by Van Toorenenbergen for our Symbolic Writings in general, and the Netherlands Confession in particular; that which has been accomplished by De Hoop Scheffer and others for the study of the "*Mennonitica*" seems to have remained unknown to Dr. Schaff. Thus also, on other points perhaps, additional *supplenda* might be mentioned, besides those with which this third edition has been enriched. But absolute completeness, even if possible, was not actually necessary, and

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the merit at least of having proceeded, not mechanically but critically, in the employment of the aids at his disposal, cannot be disputed to the author. We are at a loss to know how it would be possible, within definite limits, to accomplish a work like this more *con amore*, and equally so to know how it could have been accomplished in a more genuinely Christian historic spirit. We cannot say that this book is altogether indispensable for the knowledge and appreciation—*e.g.*, of our own symbolic literature, or that one learns from it things entirely new. But, as a carefully prepared collection of *those* Christian creeds against which serious contradiction cannot be advanced on any side, it well deserves a place in every theological library, and especially in every public theological library. This it does on the ground of its contents, but also because—as the renowned Dorner has already, with truth, observed—the publication of this particular book in America, sometimes thought of as the land of sects *par excellence*, may be looked upon as a phenomenon, surprising indeed, but quite explicable. The reception it at once met with in its native land is certainly a gladdening proof that—though formerly many preachers there, specially Methodist preachers, boasted that they “had not worn out their backs against the wall of any college”—a better spirit begins now to prevail, and that the combining of the Anglo-American Realism with the thorough-going Germanic science promises something of true worth for Church and theology both in the Old World and in the New.

As regards this “*Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiæ*” in general and in itself, apart from all details, it is impossible in spirit to wander through it without the thoughts being multiplied in presence of such a portion of Church History and the History of Doctrines as here passes before our eyes. On the value and use of Ecclesiastical Confessional writings, opinions will continue, especially in our time, to be exceedingly various, but certainly we are not the only men who hear resounding in our ears from pages like these an earnest warning against the *disavowal* of such symbols on the one hand, and the *over-estimate* of them on the other. No, verily (history emphatically enjoins it upon us!) let there be no disavowal of the faith and wisdom of the fathers, as though the science of faith had first begun to dawn with the children; no interruption of the line of continuity, which, in this domain also, connects the present with the past; no indifferent slighting of the ripened fruit of so much labour of spirit, watered and sealed with precious martyr-blood! But just as little, nay, still less, the vain delusion of a syllabistic over-estimation, as though such watchwords, however excellent, were able to accomplish that which can be effected by the Word and Spirit of truth alone.

Melanchthon in his day knew this well when he prefaced his *Loci*, to which Luther at first desired to see canonical authority assigned, with the deeply significant words:—“*Fallitur quisque aliunde Christianismi formam petit, quam e Scripturâ Canonicâ.*”

But what we have said detracts nothing from the value of that

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which is furnished in the volumes before us, that no Christian Church may ever place its *credo* above, or even on a level with, the "Evangelium Aeternum." Only where *this* banner is raised aloft will the fair motto of the United States—"E Pluribus Unum"—become that of the Christian community, pitifully erring and misled, but in this sign destined to conquer. No one is more fully assured with us thereof than the author of this "Bibliotheca" himself; whose hand in parting from his magnificent work, we gratefully press in thought. By means of his work, too, and that of kindred spirits in America, "may the New Continent," as was prayed on the festive occasion at New York above referred to, "become a sparkling jewel in Immanuel's Crown."

J. J. VAN OOSTERZEE.

## DALTON'S LIFE OF JOHN A LASCO.\*

"IN all the lands of the Reformation we find that it was men richly endowed with grace whom the Lord of the Church called to enter upon the heritage he had handed down. Like victorious generals, these men led the hosts of believers into the sanctuary of the Word, and showed them there, as the most precious treasure of the Reformation, the only salvation through the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Was such a man wanting to Poland? Did no hero arise among her manly sons to respond to the call of the Lord, 'Here am I, send me'?"

To the question thus put, the pages of Pastor Dalton afford a gladdening answer. Out of the bosom of the Polish nobility, in the days of its highest splendour, John à Lasco was called, at the sacrifice of all earthly ease, to follow his Lord and Master on the path of poverty and rejection. And he was obedient to the heavenly voice. After the lapse of years he was able to write, from his place of ministry in East Friesland, to his friend Bullinger,—“In short, to declare to you the benefit and goodness of the Lord towards me, I was once a Pharisee of good repute, adorned with many titles and dignities, laden with many and rich benefices from my boyish years; but now, after I have, of my own free will and by the grace of God, left all these things behind; after I have given up my country and my friends, because I saw I could not in their midst live in Christ's mind and Spirit, I am in a foreign land, a poor servant of my poor Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for me; for some time minister of the Church here, to proclaim the Gospel, after the will of Him, who of His compassion has called me out of the net of the Pharisees to His flock.”

\* *Johannes à Lasco. Beitrag zur Reformationsgeschichte Polens, Deutschlands, und Englands, von Hermann Dalton. Mit Porträt. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1881.*

[CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, JANUARY, 1892.]

In this transparent language the history of his whole life is presented to us—the life of one who, though not called to labour from the beginning of the Reformation, has by the grace given him exercised an influence upon the character of the Reformation Church, of which after ages make us ever more deeply and more gratefully conscious. A Lasco, who was the first to introduce into England the Presbyterian Church order, and that, beyond doubt, in the purest form in which it had been exemplified since apostolic times, was born at the ancestral castle of Lask in the last year of the fifteenth century—about six years before the birth of Knox, and ten before that of Calvin. He was the second of three sons, of whom Jerome was the eldest, and Stanislaus the youngest. In this baronial castle, now in ruins, Johannes spent his childhood in the society of his two brothers and four sisters. When, as it would seem, about eleven years of age, he and his two brothers were removed by their uncle, recently elevated to the dignity of archbishop and primate of Poland, to his palace in Cracow, for the advantage of such influences as this famous university city, for so it was then, could afford them.\*

Three years later, in the Summer of 1513, we accompany our Johannes and his elder brother Jerome, under the care of the tutor of the household, to Rome, in the suite of the archbishop, for the prosecution of their studies at the university there. It was during the pontificate of Leo X.; and the uncle was entrusted with a commission to the Lateran Council summoned by this pontiff. The stay of the young men in Rome lasted only until the conclusion of the following year, when they removed with their tutor to Bologna. The second year of their student life at Bologna marked an era in the history of the revival of learning—it was the year in which Erasmus issued his first edition of the Greek Testament, accompanied with a Latin paraphrase. While à Lasco was in Bologna an *émeute* arose between the students of the different nations. This was the occasion of an eloquent defence of the German, Bohemian, and Polish students, made before the authorities by Ulrich von Hutten. The disparity of age, however, between the German knight and the young Polish noble was too great for any personal acquaintance to spring up between them. The student life of the brothers at Bologna, some time before reinforced by the presence of the youngest brother and several companions from their own land, was brought to a close in 1517, ever memorable as the year of the dawn of the Reformation.

The year 1517 saw Johannes launched upon his career as an ecclesiastic, and his brother Jerome upon that of a statesman. The warm love of their childhood still attached them to each other in after life, notwithstanding the difference of their vocation. Honours came in quick succession upon our Johannes during these early years of his ecclesiastical life. In 1521 we find him, at the age of twenty-two,

\* The University had been founded by Casimir the Great in the marshy town of Casimir in the year 1364. It was transferred to Cracow by Ladislaw in the year 1400, eleven years before the foundation of the University of St. Andrews.

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already dean of the metropolitan church at Gnesen, and head of the cathedral chapter there. Up to this time he was a faithful and devoted son of his Church. To all appearance, a brilliant career was opening before him. Nothing he had yet witnessed was able to shake his confidence in the Divine authority of the Church of Rome as the one holy Catholic Church of Christ. If abuses had sprung up, that Church possessed within itself the remedy for the same. Yet he could not be insensible to the progress of the evangelical movement in the neighbouring land of Germany and on the western frontiers of his own country. The nature of this movement, moreover, was being freely discussed in every noble's castle of Poland, and amongst the burghers of every important town of the land. Lasco, who identified the Reformation with certain disorders which accompanied it, was desirous only of guarding the frontiers of his native land against the spread of the infection. Yet his own mind seems not to have been perfectly at ease. He was conscious of a want which he was not able to define. Perhaps his mind would find some relief in travelling.

The opportunity for travelling was not long wanting. At the end of December, 1523, or beginning of January, 1524, our Johannes is on a visit to Basle. He had gone thither in company with his brother Jerome, who was charged with a confidential mission from Sigismund of Poland to the court of Francis I. Jerome passed some weeks at Basle, on his way to Paris. There the brothers formed an acquaintance, which quickly ripened into a warm attachment, with Erasmus, then in the zenith of his fame. The intimacy between Erasmus and our Johannes was maintained for some years, and ceased only towards 1530, owing, as it would seem, to a growing divergency of views between the king of the humanists and the young Polish ecclesiastic, and that upon questions not exclusively political. "In the somewhat vainglorious letter of Erasmus, now growing elderly, from his retreat at Freiburg in 1530, in which he speaks of his friends and acquaintances in Poland, no mention is made of Lasco." Dalton suggests that a change of religious feeling may have been at the bottom of this estrangement. On the 23rd February of this year (1524), Farel, then about thirty-five years of age, was pouring forth his burning eloquence against the abuses of the Papacy in Basle, Œcolampadius interpreting for him to his German audience. Among those who listened to his words was our *à* Lasco. A quarter of a century afterwards, Lasco, mindful of his sojourn in Basle, in a letter to Calvin sends his greetings to this fearless preacher of the Gospel. About the month of March, Farel was compelled to withdraw from Basle, in consequence of a difference with Erasmus, and retired to Strasburg.

In the spring of 1524, we find the two brothers in Paris. While there Johannes listened to the evangelical expositions of Lefèvre of Etaples (Faber Stapulensis), with whose name he had been familiar from his boyhood, and whose friendship he now gained. "Faber was then,"



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says Dalton, "firmly convinced that he could still claim a place and toleration for his views, which were already most bitterly assailed by the opponents within the Mother Church. As yet the terrible moment of decision had not come for the aged man. He timidly shrunk from the dreaded hour. But on his death-bed in 1536, the man of eighty-six was tortured by the feeling that he had been too weak in the hour of peril, that the martyr's courage of a confessor had failed him, and that he had forfeited the crown of life, which his heroic disciples and friends, the noble Pauvant, the fearless confessor Berguin, had won by their faithfulness to the death of the stake." From his contact with this evangelical expounder of Scripture, Lasco doubtless received a fresh impulse in the path which led to his ultimate severance from Rome.

Much that is new is communicated in the volume before us concerning the relations subsisting at this time between our hero and the evangelical Marguerite of Valois, and very touching is the contrast drawn between the career of fearless and unshrinking fidelity of the generous Pole, and that of the refined and sensitive princess of France. The verdict pronounced by our author upon the beloved and loving Marguerite, the friend of Lasco, as afterwards of Calvin, is perhaps not too severe, but yet one cannot help remembering in her favour the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren."

Whether Lasco returned to Basle direct from Paris is unknown. At any rate we find him again in the Swiss Rhine city at the end of 1524, and he prolonged his residence there until the 5th October, 1525. Erasmus was living at the house of Froben, the renowned printer. Lasco rented an apartment of Erasmus, and provided the common table for them both. Erasmus was then engaged in his controversy with Luther on the freedom of the will, a controversy in which the strong common sense of the humanist proved no match for the deeper moral insight of the Reformer. "Erasmus," says Dorner, "at first makes man richer than Luther does; but how far superior in the long run is Luther's notion of freedom to that of Erasmus, for whom the highest and best thereof is resolved into freedom of choice; who consequently must teach an everlasting possibility of falling, and thus makes perfection for ever insecure. Luther's notion of freedom leads to the God-like real freedom wrought by grace; for this it must appear not a prerogative but a defect, to be still involved in choice and hesitancy." "If we believe," says Luther in his reply to Erasmus, "that Christ has redeemed us with His blood, we must confess that the whole man was lost, otherwise we make Christ become unnecessary for us." Erasmus compares himself to one of those pillars of Mercury in ancient Rome, which set up at the cross roads, point out to the traveller the way, without entering upon it themselves. "The humanist," says Dalton, *did* enter upon the path of the Reformation, but alas! shrunk back in timidity when he saw what he might have to encounter in this course." At the moment when Lasco was bidding farewell to Erasmus in Basle,

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William Tyndall was busy in Antwerp seeking, at the peril of his life, to obtain a transit for his English translation of the New Testament. Humanism was a stranger to this noble self-sacrifice!

A Lasco returned to Poland by way of the Alps and Italy, taking Padua on his route, and making a somewhat lengthy stay in Venice, reaching Posen only on the 8th of April, 1526. He had thought it necessary to shun the direct route through Augsburg and Leipsic, yet was unable to avoid the charge of having held communication with Luther. A loud outcry of heresy was raised against him, an outcry which had the less foundation, inasmuch as Lasco had been somewhat prejudiced against the great German Reformer during his prolonged sojourn with Erasmus. He found it necessary, however, to make a declaration on oath of his continued and unimpaired submission to the Apostolic See of Rome. He could certainly do this with a clear conscience, as we see him in the following year (1527) still occupying the standpoint of Bishop Sadolet, who conceded to Divine grace a much greater part than Erasmus was willing to admit, and even declared in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith, maintaining a friendly epistolary correspondence with such men as Bucer, Sturm, and Melancthon; yet sought to preserve his diocese free from all contact with Protestantism, though he could not be induced to join in the persecution of Protestants. Moreover, even Œcolampadius and Pellican, as our author remarks, had not yet taken the last decisive step at the time of Lasco's stay in Basle.

The death of the archbishop, 19th May, 1531, brought our Lasco into more direct and independent intercourse with the bishops of his native land. A nearer acquaintance thus obtained with the spirit of corruption and intrigue, which governed the actions of the prelates of that day, must have tended to diminish the ardour of his attachment to his Church, and to destroy his hope of any reformation being effected from within. The rejection, too, of the Papal authority on the part of England during this year would not be without its influence on the current of his thoughts.

At the time of the Wittenberg Concord (May, 1536) the report was current that Lasco was present in Wittenberg. He was present only in heart, the time of his final rupture with the Papacy had not yet come. Two years later (1538) he was called to the archidiaconate, and in the same year the king offered him the bishopric of Cujavia. The latter office was declined by Lasco, who with great freedom explained to the king his altered convictions. To the end of Sigismund's life he did not cease to honour the man for whom Christ's cross and shame and persecution had greater attractions than the bishop's mitre.

## I.

At the time of Lasco's voluntary exile for the Gospel's sake, Calvin was preaching at Strasburg, Farel at Neufchatel; Zwingli and Œcolam-

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padius had been taken home eight years before ; Knox was on the point of making a profession of the Reformed faith. Our friend first directed his steps to Frankfort-on-the-Main. Here he formed a friendship with Albert Hardenberg, whom he accompanied to Mayence as soon as Hardenberg had recovered from an illness which had prostrated him in Frankfort. Hardenberg stayed in Mayence to take his degree of doctor. Lasco was present at the "promotion." From February to June, 1539, the Elector Albert was holding his court at Mayence. Lasco was furnished with letters of recommendation from his king, among others in all probability to this elector, who had once, full of enthusiasm for humanistic studies, sat at the feet of Erasmus. He had now received the cardinal's hat and the golden rose from the pope, and had no longer a reception for the humble servant of Jesus Christ, an exile for the truth. Nevertheless, the end of the cardinal-electors is not more enviable than that of the Polish reformer. After obtaining his doctorate, Hardenberg returned to his native land. Lasco accompanied him to Brussels, thence in the summer of 1540 to Antwerp, thence to Louvain, the headquarters of Romanism in the Low Countries, which Hardenberg had been obliged to quit before, as being suspected of too liberal views.

Lasco attached himself at once to the little gathering of the reformed in Louvain, and there gained very precious knowledge for his practical life of after years. The description given of the meetings of this little company is deeply touching—one almost sees the light of a higher world resting upon those calm, yet strangely joyous countenances. Lasco, together with his amanuensis Utenhove, a native of Ghent, and his friend Hardenberg, had not long removed from Louvain when the secret meeting-place of these believers was discovered. Every member of the little assembly died a martyr's death with great constancy. While in Louvain Lasco married a young lady of a burgher family in that town.

About the latter part of Autumn of 1540 Lasco removed to Emden, in East Friesland, on the opposite side of the bay which bounds the Groningen or West Friesland district. The land was then under the rule of the noble Countess Anna. Here he could breathe a freer air ; but it was as yet with him a time of waiting. His friend, Hardenberg, still shrank from quitting the Church of his fathers, and had entered the cloister of Aduard in Friesland. But the appeals made to him by à Lasco were not in vain. Seven years later, he led home the Sister "Frutje" (Gertrude—Lasco in his letters always calls her Drusilla) as his companion for life in his Bremen pastorate. She, too, had been won from a neighbouring convent by the faithfulness of Lasco.

To return to our history. Two years of uncertainty passed before Lasco felt himself called to the work the Lord had appointed for him. During this interval his brother Jerome came home to Cracow to die, from the effects of the privations endured during an imprisonment in

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Turkey. Johannes hastened from Emden, and reached Cracow in time to be with him during his last days. The loss of this brother was a deep grief to him.

In the spring of 1542 Lasco was again in Emden. In the beginning of 1543 he is chosen superintendent of the Reformed Church in East Friesland. Here the decision displayed by him in the removal of the last traces of the Papal leaven out of the worship laid the foundation for the after prosperity of the Church of Holland, and gave earnest of the still more important work which was to be accomplished by him in England eight years later. Lasco succeeded in establishing a spiritual discipline in East Friesland, as a means to which he appointed a "synod" of all the ministers of the land, which was to meet in Emden every Monday morning. The minutes for the first century are unhappily lost, the oldest minute-book now existing beginning with the date of 18th April, 1642. This synod became, for many successive generations, a source of inestimable blessing for the Church of East Friesland.

Lasco could not consent to retain office without the maintenance of a Scriptural discipline. "If others," he writes to Hardenberg, "in their office will allow the dignity of the Word of God to be exposed to contempt, I cannot help it; but that, out of enmity towards me the power of the Word of God in my ministry should be despised, is what I cannot endure." He, accordingly, laid down his bishopric about the end of February or beginning of March, 1546, although he retained the office of minister at the great church in Emden. Yet this only on condition that his hands should be left perfectly free to maintain discipline in accordance with the Word of God.

The Church could not long dispense with the labours of its single-minded leader. Negotiations were opened as early as the month of May with a view to induce him to resume his office. He would consent only on condition that he was permitted to follow the Lord *with both feet*. The malcontents were not willing to impose upon themselves a voluntary resignation of office as the price of their consistency, and were equally unwilling to make an unconditional submission. Their end might perhaps be accomplished by pressure from without. Remonstrances against Lasco's work of reformation poured in from Bremen, Hamburg, Brunswick, and Wittenberg, which was mourning over the newly-closed grave of Luther. All was in vain. "The truth is mighty, and yields not to human wisdom, even though the whole world sink in ruins (*etiam si fractus illabatur orbis*)," writes our friend, strong in the faith, and fully assured of victory. Never had the verse of Horace been put to a better use.

A little glimpse into the domestic life of Lasco at Emden is afforded us in Pastor Dalton's volume. Five children were, as it would seem, born to our friend there. Barbara and Ludovica, both of whom we meet with at Cracow in 1558, were then betrothed; in 1546 a son

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was born, whom he named Paul, but who lived only three months. We hear afterwards of two younger sons, who bear respectively the names of John and Jerome. In their names, as in those of the daughters, is preserved a remembrance of old family names at home.

Up to the year 1544 strong influence was brought to bear upon Lasco, in order to get him to return to Poland; even the attraction of a leading bishopric was held out to him with this end in view. The testimony borne by Lasco to the King of Poland on this occasion is one worthy of the man and the cause he had at heart.

A fresh source of trouble was now in store for our Reformer. The Emperor Charles V. had resolved upon compelling the reluctant Countess Anna to submit to the terms of the Leipsic "Interim," by which the rights of the Reformed Church of Christ, the crown rights of the Redeemer, were cruelly invaded. The Emperor's messenger reached Emden at the end of August, 1548. Lasco did not indulge in any self-deception with regard to the gravity of the situation, but neither did he for a moment quail in his resolution. "Great and powerful is the Emperor who commands," he writes, "but greater and more powerful is God who forbids. The Emperor we must indeed obey, *but only unto the threshold of the altar.*"

At the time when the Emperor's messenger arrived, Lasco was on the point of accepting an invitation from England to co-operate in the ordering of Church affairs in that land. The Countess had already given the needed leave of absence, stipulating, however, that he should return at the expiration of some months to the service of the East Frisian Church. He was able to make the journey only in disguise and under an assumed name, so great was the bitterness of the opponents of the Reformation.

## II.

A brief review of the course of affairs at the beginning of Edward VI.'s reign may be necessary to explain how it came about that Lasco was called to take part in the ordering of the doctrine and discipline of the Reformed Church of England. A few months after the accession of Edward in January, 1547, Peter Martyr was called over from Strasburg in accordance with a settled plan of Cranmer's, and was made regius professor of divinity in Oxford. At the same time (December, 1547), Ochino, Italian preacher in London, was made prebendary of Canterbury. Cranmer, who about the year 1532, had married the niece of Andrew Osiander, entered warmly into the work of Reformation, and the Duke of Somerset and some of the lay nobles still more warmly. In a letter to Bucer, then at Strasburg, bearing date 2nd October, 1548, Cranmer, with great affection, urges this reformer to "set aside all hesitation and come over as soon as possible." Cranmer, in a letter to Lasco, explains his motive in the calling of these great men to England: "We regard the presence of learned men to be necessary, who, combining their judgment with ours, shall remove all doctrinal disputation, and



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lay down a complete system (*integrum corpus*) of pure doctrine." Two men in particular were the means of drawing Cranmer's attention to à Lasco. Peter Martyr who knew and esteemed him in Strasburg, and Dr. Turner, a physician who had some years before left England for the faith's sake, and lived during the interval in Emden, in close and intimate friendship with à Lasco. At first, in the summer of 1548, à Lasco did not see his way to leave the Church of East Friesland, even for a few months. He urged Melanchthon to accept the call, but the Wittenberg reformer felt justified in declining it. A Lasco eventually came, and at the cost of a great sacrifice exerted an influence upon the formation of the Church of England, which endures to this hour.

When our friend landed in England, Bucer (died February, 1551), and Fagius (died November, 1550), were busily occupied, the former at Oxford, and the latter at Cambridge, in preparing a Latin translation of the Bible. The Spaniard, Dryander (Enzinas), warmly recommended by Melanchthon, likewise met with a kindly reception. Poulain was preaching to the French refugees in London, and Ochino to the Italians. Cranmer entertained à Lasco in the palace at Lambeth. "Johannes à Lasco," says the Archbishop, "*vir optimus, mecum hosce aliquot menses conjunctissime et amantissime vixit*" (John à Lasco, an excellent man, lived with me during those few months upon most intimate and friendly terms). The Swiss John ab Ulnis (Von Eschen), writes in a letter of 18th August, 1548, that the Protestants had been greatly discouraged by the temporising of the Archbishop. But four months later he writes in tones of gladness: "Thomas Cranmer also is recovered in great part from his lethargy, by the goodness of God, and the instrumentality of that most upright and judicious man, Master John à Lasco." English writers are disposed to trace this change to the influence of Dr. Ridley, then Bishop of Rochester. But how comes it to pass that the influence of Ridley coincides in point of time with the residence of à Lasco at Lambeth?

To this period Dalton is inclined to assign an important letter of Calvin to Cranmer, which bears no date. Calvin had already dedicated to Somerset his commentary on the Epistles to Timothy. Lasco was present with Cranmer at Windsor when the sittings were held there, which resulted in the publication of King Edward the Sixth's Prayer Book,\* though our friend was prostrated at the time of these sittings with severe illness. Amongst his most intimate associates at this period were Hugh Latimer, William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, the eminent Sir John Cheke, Sir Richard Moryson, and Dr. Turner.

The leave of absence granted to à Lasco expired in the spring of 1549. Despite all entreaties to the contrary, our friend embarked on the Thames in the middle of March, and reached the mouth of the Ems in safety, after a prosperous voyage of three days. The voyage was made in company with Count von Mansfeld, who was returning

\* Date of publication: "Anno dom. 1549, Mense Maji."

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from a diplomatic mission to the English court. In one of the sermons preached before the king on the Friday mornings, Hugh Latimer, on the 22nd March, thus alludes to our friend's departure: "Johannes à Lasco was here, a great learned man, and as they say, a nobleman in his country, and is gone his way again. . . . I should wish such men as he to be in the realm, for the realm should prosper on receiving of them, 'Who receiveth you, receiveth me,' says Christ."

The remainder of à Lasco's life must be reserved for a second article.

MAURICE J. EVANS.

### HEALTH LECTURES FOR THE PEOPLE.\*

IF any readers of *The Catholic Presbyterian* at a distance are accustomed to think of Edinburgh chiefly as the city of John Knox and Thomas Chalmers, and the cradle of a Church which has withstood the storms of centuries and sent her boughs to the sea and her branches to the river, it may be well to remind them that it enjoys a fame hardly inferior as the seat of a medical school, whose practitioners draw patients from all parts of the globe, and whose professors deliver daily instructions to no fewer than 1400 medical students. More than that, Edinburgh for several generations has enjoyed the services of a unique school of Christian physicians and surgeons, who have been a marked feature in its society, and a very great blessing to the community. If all its most distinguished practitioners have not been conspicuous as Christian men, a sufficient number have held that position to give a marked Christian lustre to the medical profession. The singular advantage of this state of things has come out in many ways, direct and indirect. The Church, and notably the Presbyterian Church, as well as the religious and benevolent societies, have had the services of men high in their profession and social influence, and conspicuous for ability and zeal. Of the benevolent societies which have sprung from this class, it may be enough to specify the Edinburgh Medical Mission, a society at once catholic in its spirit, and cosmopolitan in its operations. We shall not readily forget the joyful enthusiasm of a well-known septuagenarian, the Hon. W. E. Dodge, of New York, when present last summer at a meeting in Edinburgh, at which eight young medical missionaries were designated to their work.

\* Health Lectures for the People: Care of the Body, by Professor Fleeming Jenkin; Food and Drink, by J. A. Wilson, M.B.; Lungs and Air, by Andrew Wilson, Ph.D.; The Blood and its Circulation, by Jas. Foulis, M.D.; On Accidents, by Professor Annandale; Hints to Women, by Angus Macdonald, M.D.; On the Rearing of Children, by C. F. Underhill, M.B.; Water in Houses, by Stevenson Macadam, Ph.D.; Stimulants and Tobacco, by Professor T. R. Fraser; Preventable Disease, by Andrew Smart, M.D. Edinburgh, Macniven & Wallace. Price One Shilling.

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Knowing something of the medical profession in Edinburgh, and the high Christian influence of some of its members, we were able to throw some light on the genesis of so interesting an event. In many other ways we think we can trace the influence of the Christian element in the profession. Some medical men, who are not perhaps in active sympathy with this spirit, yet partake of it so far as to take a lively interest in the welfare of the people, and give their services freely and cordially for the purpose of advancing it. The scheme of health lectures for the people, to which we wish to draw attention in this paper, is an instance in point. Not directly religious in its aim or execution, it is yet in no way hostile to religion; and it shows throughout that desire to get the masses to honour the Divine laws of health, and to enjoy the blessings that flow therefrom, which is indirectly a fruit of Christianity. There are many reasons, as it seems to us, why the attention of our Presbyterian brethren throughout the world should be turned to this interesting movement.

The Presbyterian Churches have always been marked for a broad humanity—for an interest not merely in the religious, but in the social and intellectual advancement of man. The fact that the early Reformed Church of Scotland charged itself from the beginning with two great human interests—the care of the poor, and the cause of education—is a sufficient confirmation of this remark. In the course of time, and as the social life of the country developed itself, a difference began to be apprehended between the work with which the Church is directly charged—the spiritual welfare of the people—and other operations, subordinate and subsidiary, with which she is not directly entrusted, but which she is bound to encourage as best she can. The fact that education and the care of the poor are now placed in Scotland under other managements is no reason why the Church should cease to smile on them, and use all her influence to promote their prosperity in her borders. The same is true of the cause of popular health. It is not the province of the Church, at least in these days of the division of labour, to step into the arena, and acquaint the people with the laws which God has given for the preservation of health. But when enlightened physicians and surgeons undertake this task, and execute it in a way that must command a high measure of confidence and approval, the Church surely should give her benediction, and encourage the like work to be undertaken in other communities where it is as much if not more required.

Surely the Christian Church would be showing a grievous forgetfulness of her Heavenly Founder if she ceased to cherish a most lively interest in the cause of popular health. The healing art received a wonderful consecration from Him who went about healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. By far the largest proportion of our Lord's miracles were miracles of healing. In the profound ignorance of natural science which prevailed in those days,

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our Lord could not give due prominence to the healing of disease without this application of supernatural power. Whether "gifts of healing" have ceased in the Church, or whether the method of Dorothy Trudel be a genuine method or not, are questions which it is unnecessary to discuss here. It seems plain enough that what was effected in our Lord's day by supernatural power must be achieved in these times by natural means. And nothing can be more conducive to the advancement of health by natural means than enlightening the people on its laws. The time seems now to have come when that may be done with advantage. The old blind feeling is passing away that health is a mysterious, capricious agent, whose tricks can neither be comprehended nor controlled. The popular mind now knows enough of natural law and its irresistible influence to inquire with eager curiosity as to its way of working in the sphere of health. And when some simple facts bearing on this shall have really taken hold of the popular mind, their influence for the better will be unbounded. Ten thousand mischievous and malarious influences will be arrested, and, with God's blessing, the life of the masses will not only be healthier, but happier and brighter than before.

The introduction of lessons on the laws of health into some of our elementary school-books suggests the remark that teachers of primary schools might do great service in this cause if they were so disposed. Not in the way of making their scholars premature valetudinarians—for the carelessness of childhood as to health will not be easily moved—but in the way of expounding those views of the human frame and its appropriate treatment which, when the need of care becomes more apparent, will indicate the direction in which the care should be applied. There are few classes who may do more than teachers in the interests of humanity, provided always that their attention is not artificially restricted to "paying" branches of instruction. Those teachers are worthy of the highest encouragement who do not content themselves with the routine work of their school, but are continually aiming to make their children more enlightened in their views and better in their lives—better in manners, in habits, in aims, and in the spirit that always seeks to be useful and obliging.

One thing in these lectures is deserving of special commendation—the self-denying spirit in which they are carried on. In reality these lectures teach people to do, to a large extent, without doctors. That our Edinburgh doctors should be actuated by this spirit shows that Dr. Hornbook does not represent the faculty, and that its members generally value the claims of medical science above the mere interests of the profession.

We do not intend to enter into details, except on a single point. Temperance reformers have been making great efforts of late to remedy disease by reforming the drinking customs of the people. It would seem that reform is hardly less needed as to what they eat than as to

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what they drink. In particular, the feeding of infants and young children seems often to be very defective. When inquiry was made recently in Liverpool as to the supply of milk, it was found that it amounted, on a somewhat liberal calculation, to only a pint a-week for every individual. A better supply of good milk for our great cities would be an inestimable boon. So would a better supply of fish for the mass of the population. We welcome all well-conducted movements in these directions. Many things have to be taken into account in providing for our large and ever-increasing cities. Their social condition is one of the greatest problems of the age. The Christian Church must never undervalue her own special lever—the Gospel; but she ought to regard with beneficent eye, and welcome with sympathetic heart all that tends in any way to scatter the darkness and brighten the lot of toiling humanity.

W. G. BLAIKIE.

## IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR IRELAND?

THE history of this unhappy country during 1881, and its present condition, might well prompt us to answer this question in the negative. Violence is as rampant as ever. Hatred of England deepens as her benefactions increase. What can be expected of a people who are ready to pierce the hand that holds out to them the greatest boon ever bestowed upon the country? Nevertheless, in the face of all that is sad and lowering, we are sanguine of the future.

Just now we are in the throes of a great social revolution. The Land Act, which was the main product of the late session of Parliament, is coming into operation, and is the absorbing topic of interest to all classes—one party hailing it, and another denouncing it as sheer confiscation. It will undoubtedly affect landowners in two ways. So far as it may be applied, it is likely to diminish their incomes by one-fifth, while, with the help of the ballot, it will divest them largely of that social and political supremacy they have long enjoyed. Whatever the great magnates may think of the latter of these evils, they are in a position to regard the former with complacency. Not so the smaller men—what with encumbrances and mortgages, their incomes already overloaded, the reduction of one-fifth means to many of them absolute ruin. Already they raise the cry for Imperial compensation.

The tenants will be benefited in many ways. On the average, their rents will be reduced one-fifth. Their tenure will be made secure for fifteen years, and they will be shielded from the fear of irresponsible exaction and tyranny; and as regards political rights, they become for the first time in history—*freemen*.

It remains to be seen to what extent the tillers of the soil will claim



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the advantages of the new Act. It was devised in their interest, with the view of making life in the old country tolerable, and enduing them with some measure of social independence. For the administration of the law, a new court has been created. Already this court is glutted with applications, and the pressure is so great it has been found necessary to organise twelve inferior courts, and even these are held to be insufficient to bring the provisions of the Act into full operation. In some cases the owners and the tillers of the soil enter into friendly arrangements, and avoid the courts altogether.

In some districts of the south and west the new law is execrated even by the tenants, who not only refuse to take advantage of it, but doggedly refuse to pay any rent whatever! This singular position arises from two causes. In the first place, from the counsels of the leaders of the Land League. These men expressed their determination, even before the bill passed into law, to make it null and void. Exasperated by utter defeat in Parliament, they resolved, whatever might be the effect of their action on the poor tenantry, to mortify the Government by making their great measure a dead letter, and so they advised their too facile dupes not only to avoid the new land courts, but to pay no rent.

Another cause of abstention from these courts is the traditional belief that *the land belongs to the people*. That the Sassenach is an intruder and usurper, and should be swept out of the country. The belief of some is, that if they stand together and hold out against paying any rent the whole race of landlords must become extinct, and then literally, and to the fullest extent, Ireland shall belong to the so-called Irish race. This position amounts to a repudiation of all moral and legal obligation, and could only be taken up by a people utterly demoralised by evil counsel. This class must diminish daily. Some of them will be summarily evicted by process of law, and thrown helpless out of their holdings, while others, prompted by the instinct of self-preservation, will seek the protection and fostering care of the new Act.

It is interesting to note the relation in which several sections of the Irish people stand to this celebrated measure. In the north it is hailed as a boon and blessing, and the people are flocking in thousands to take advantage of its provisions. The Presbyterians (both ministers and people) are specially grateful to its promoters. They have had a hard struggle for two centuries and a-half against what they regarded as injustice and oppression. Many of their fathers felt compelled to seek a home and liberty in other lands. Those who clung to the old soil feel that now their emancipation is complete. It could hardly be expected that landowners in any part of the country would regard with favour an Act that so impairs their influence and diminishes their income. Nevertheless, in the north most of them have acquiesced with a good grace, some have even expressed satisfaction.

The higher orders of the Catholic clergy are, on the whole, well pleased.

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They are horrified at some of the doctrines broached by what is called "The National Party." They go in for the rights of property, and express a wholesome dread of that spirit of independence and free-thinking that savours somewhat of Continental communism. The genius of the hierarchy, all the world over, is intensely conservative. They cherish, I have no doubt sympathy, for their suffering countrymen, but they look with aversion on any movement that tends, however remotely, in the direction of the French Revolution. Besides all this, they are wise enough to perceive that their Church gains more by connection with wealthy and generous England than they could ever hope from an Irish Parliament.

Not so with the inferior orders of the priesthood. Sprung from the people—living among and dependent on the people—their sympathies are deeper and more real. Face to face with the wretchedness of the peasantry, they keep alive the traditions of the race. They stimulate the old grudge against England, in memory of all the oppressions and persecutions of other days, and though they know that the idea is preposterous and utopian, they encourage the people to expect the total abolition of landlordism, and the ultimate enjoyment of the soil by themselves, as their national right. While careful to keep within the lines of obedience to their bishops, they cast in their influence with the ignorant masses, and not unfrequently become leaders in what all loyal citizens must regard as incipient rebellion.

As to the landlord class in the south and west, they are in a state bordering on distraction. Some of them are in daily terror of their lives, many have left the country, and not a few are reduced to penury. To most of them it would be a positive relief if their tenants went into the Land Court, on the principle that a reduced rent is better than no rent at all.

From this rapid glance at the state of parties, and their relation to the Land Act, it will be seen how difficult it is to govern such a country. Here is a great measure, devised in the most patriotic and sympathetic spirit, its leading object being to remedy past injustice, to redress existing grievances, to shield the oppressed, to bring hope, independence, and some measure of comfort to the farming class, and yet a portion of that very class whom it is designed to benefit, who clamoured most vehemently for its introduction, turn out its implacable enemies. It has neither satisfied nor silenced them. Instead of exciting gratitude it intensifies their hatred, and stimulates them to deeper and darker deeds of outrage.

No wonder we set out with the question: "Is there any hope for Ireland?" Can anything more be done, consistent with the safety, the honour, and the legitimate interests of peaceable and loyal citizens? Or is the country to be given up as a prey to a lawless and irresponsible faction? For the last fifty years the British Parliament has been largely occupied in redressing the admitted wrongs of Ireland. One

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grievance after another has been removed, till at last the tillers of the soil have been elevated to a vantage ground unknown in any other part of the world, and yet a portion at least of the people are not satisfied. Like the horse-leech, the cry is still, "Give, give." At this moment the latent fires of rebellion smoulder under the surface, and are only kept in check by the presence of a strong military force.

After all, we won't despair of our unhappy country. We are not without signs of progress and of brighter days. In many parts of the land the people are settling down to their several walks of peaceful industry. With many of them wealth and comfort are on the increase. New forms of manufacture and new fields of commerce are opening up. Every encouragement is given to the education of the people, from the highest to the lowest, without distinction of class or creed. All denominations are on the same level as to eligibility to offices of influence and trust. Protection and stimulus are now given to the labours of the field. The number of law-abiding citizens is increasing, and will increase. The irreconcilables are doomed to die out. They may issue their malignant and futile manifestoes from behind the bars of many a well-filled prison, but the great mass of the Irish people are beginning to recognise and feel the softening and attracting influence of those beneficent measures which the Imperial Parliament was too tardy in framing. The *latest* (we do not say the *last*) great measure fraught with an earnest and considerate purpose to lighten the burdens and alleviate the miseries of the children of toil, notwithstanding the execrations of some, will go far to tranquillise the great body of the people, and bind them in bonds of gratitude and loyalty to the Imperial English throne.

There are bright streaks of light shooting up in other directions. One of the great sources of misery in Ireland has been the drinking habits of the people. It is absolutely sickening to announce the fact that the Irish drink bill for the last year *exceeds the entire rental of the country*. Men talk of not being able to pay their rent, and we listen to them with sympathy. How is it that they can afford to spend a sum equal to their entire rent in intoxicating drinks? We need more than cheap land. We need temperate habits, before comfort and joy can reign in the homes of the people. It is encouraging to know that the drink bill is diminishing; that the drink traffic is now the burning question; that all creeds and classes, with singular unanimity, unite in demanding the re-enacting of the Sunday Closing Act, and its extension to every part of Ireland; and that the tide of public sentiment is rising rapidly in favour of the total suppression of the traffic.

Then, outside the narrowing sphere of the Land League, party spirit is dying out. The spirit of mutual toleration is spreading. Men of all parties are beginning to feel a common interest in their common country. What is better still, all the Evangelical Churches are waking up to the fact that the only true and effective remedy for the woes of Ireland is the Gospel of the grace of God. Other remedies—educa-

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tional, social, political—are subsidiary. The grace of God strikes at the root of all evil. It is this which brings true liberty and happiness to any and every nation. The revelations that have been lately made of the poverty and wretchedness of the homes of the people; of their ignorance, superstition, and vice; of their midnight marauding; of their violence and recklessness in shedding human blood; of the indistinct mutterings of infidelity; and of what has been called their veiled rebellion—have smitten the heart of the Churches of God with shame, and a deep sense of guilt, and have roused them to earnestness of evangelistic effort unknown before. What these Churches need, in presence of the work to which they feel called, is a fuller baptism of the Holy Ghost. God is opening the way. He is breaking up the fallow ground. The throes of the great crisis through which we are passing have quickened the mental powers of the Irish people. The Roman Catholics are learning to think and judge for themselves on many subjects. They are no longer to be led about by every wind of doctrine. Their implicit faith in their spiritual guides has received a shock from which it is never likely to recover. God's own hand is opening the door to the national heart by the very violence of the agitation through which we are passing.

I close this rapid sketch by a reference to the deep sympathy for Ireland that the revelation of her miseries has awakened in the hearts of the Christian people of Britain and America. We have had many proofs of this. Many inquiries from devout and earnest men—what can we do to help you? God has been revealing the bleeding hearts of the Irish people so as to awaken the sympathies of His own children all over the world. A brighter day is dawning on us.

The turbulent and disaffected have been taught a few important and needful lessons of late; lessons that are sure to tell on Ireland's future. They have been taught that the hopes held out by selfish and unprincipled adventurers can never be realised. They have been taught that for weal or woe Ireland is united to Britain never to be let go. They have been taught that down deep in the hearts of the English people there is an earnest desire to do justice and show mercy and kindness to the Irish people, and they are being taught just now in the most emphatic way that when justice, and mercy, and generosity have been meted out, then the whole power of Britain, if necessary, shall be employed to stamp out rebellion.

ROBERT KNOX.

## Notes of the Day.

**PRESBYTERIAN CONFEDERATION.**—The arts of peace are never so popular as the blaze of war, and even in religion the warrior utterly eclipses the peacemaker. Nevertheless, the peacemaker has occasionally a little encouragement, and in our humble endeavour to promote interest, sympathy, and co-operation among the Presbyterian Churches of the world, crumbs of comfort do occasionally occur. There can be no doubt that the existence of the Presbyterian Alliance and the efforts of *The Catholic Presbyterian* have aided in drawing sympathy to the Bohemian brethren, whose centenary of the Edict of Toleration has created so wide and vivid an interest. It is still more interesting to find, as letters from France in the present number show, that in that great country the Reformed Church is girding herself with strength, and, in order to wield her strength effectively, is reviving her ancient Presbyterian constitution. It may be that this movement is quite independent of ours, but it may likewise be found that it has derived an impulse from it. As the months roll on, we hope to have many evidences to unfold of reviving energy in the older Churches, and undaunted faith and courage in the new. We feel that countries like Belgium, Italy, and Spain, where the Protestant cause has to contend with an almost unbroken current of Romanism, deserve our very special sympathy and encouragement. But France is in a sense the mother of us all,—at least, as Presbyterians, we think of her as our elder sister. Her history stirs our hearts, her great names command our reverence, her persecutions thrill us, her capabilities rouse our imaginations to the uttermost. May her Protestant Church be found capable of exerting a high and blessed influence in any changes or troubles which are before her! In October, 1885, the bi-centenary of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, all eyes will be turned to her; may the years that intervene witness a glorious advance, not in worldly prestige, but in inward life and prosperity!

**LITURGIES AND FREE PRAYER.**—It is worthy of note that while some Presbyterians are expressing a desire for liturgical aid in prayer, there are Episcopalians who are uttering their longings in the opposite direction—panting for greater freedom. In a recent Episcopal Congress in America, Mr. Phillips Brooks, the great preacher of Boston, ridiculed the idea of a convention that left its business to pray for a burning city, and had nothing but the Litany to use for the expression of its feelings, laying before God almost every woe but the woe of a burning city.

“The Episcopal Church,” he said, “makes the claim that its gates are opened so wide that any Christian man who wants to come in and worship may do



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so ; but it is absolutely impossible that he should come in and worship so long as more and more, by stricter prohibition, the Church rules out one of the forms by which man can approach God. The aspirations of the Church, like an oak grown in a flower-pot, are too great for it ; either the aspirations must break the habit, or the habit stifle the aspirations. The speaker claimed to be a ritualist and a believer in a liturgy ; but one of the great principles and necessities for the growth of a liturgy was the breaking in upon set forms of worship, and the giving liberty to bishops, clergy, and laity to pour out their souls to God, wherever they be, for the very things they need, instead of compelling them to go in a roundabout way, praying for other things, and trusting Omniscience to give them the things which are in their hearts."

Mr. Brooks' remarks will remind some readers of Mr. Ruskin's view, in his "Letters to the Clergy, on the Lord's Prayer and the Church":—

"Finally, whatever the advantages and decencies of a form of prayer, and how wide soever the scope given to its collected passages, it cannot be at one and the same time fitted for the use of a body of well-taught and experienced Christians, such as should join the services of a Church nineteen centuries old, and adapted to the needs of the timid sinner who has that day just entered its porch, or of the remorseful publican who has only recently become conscious of his call to a pew.

"And surely our clergy need not be surprised at the daily increasing mistrust in the public mind of the efficacy of prayer, after having so long insisted on their offering supplication *at least* every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock that the rest of their lives hereafter might be pure and holy, leaving them conscious all the while that they would be similarly required to inform the Lord next week, at the same hour, that "there was no health in them."

POPULAR UNBELIEF.—We are concerned to find that among a class of our Scottish people, who might have been expected to have no sympathy with unbelief, some of the writings of Mr. Ingersoll of America are coming to be read, and perhaps something more. It is said, we know, that they do not agree with him, but like to know what is said, and enjoy clever writing in whatever cause ; but where the self-commending power of Christian truth is felt, there cannot but be an instinctive recoil from everything of the kind. Many cursory readers are deceived by the fresh form in which objections and difficulties are put. The truth is, that the writings of Voltaire, more than a hundred years ago, contained, with hardly an exception, all the popular jibes, scoffs, and caricatures that are now directed towards the Bible and its records of supernatural events. The Bible has survived Voltaire, with all his unrivalled brilliancy and influence, and there is no reason why it should not survive Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. It is always easy to carp, cavil, and criticise ; it is not so easy to deal with the great facts of the Bible, and the great bulwarks of the faith. "The Mistakes of Moses" is the title of one of Ingersoll's most popular tracts. Was the Decalogue one of these mistakes ? Was the noble character of Abraham a mistake ? Was the sublime drama of the Exodus a mistake ? Was that unparalleled prophecy, the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, a mistake ? It is said of Frederick the Great that once when he asked his chaplain to give him, in a sentence, a reason for believing in the

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Bible, he replied he could give it in one word. "What is that?" asked the king. "The Jews, your Majesty." A picture of the Jewish race, drawn with such minute accuracy, thousands of years before it was realised, is not, surely, to be reckoned among the "Mistakes of Moses." From whence, then, had this man his wisdom?

**PRESBYTERIAN ORPHANAGES.**—We have long held that our abler Presbyterian congregations are not elastic and varied enough in their ideas of good-doing. New life and fresh interest might be imported by leaving the ruts. Presbyterians in America set us a good example in some things. They rear hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions that provide for many very needy and destitute cases. An able congregation might do a world of good, and furnish excellent employment for its leisurely people by opening a crèche, an orphanage, a reformatory, or a refuge of some kind. We find that in Philadelphia a new arrangement has been made in connection with the Presbyterian orphanage, which we cannot but think must be a great improvement.

"Instead of a large edifice, into which fifty or one hundred children are crowded, they have built *four* cottages, to each of which is assigned a house mother and twenty orphans, making one family, and in their desolation receiving the gentle and kindly influence of home. Thus accustomed to family cares, employments, and duties, they will be better prepared to enter life without the shock they receive in passing from the crowd in which usually they are gathered. The idea is happy, and based on true principles. *God setteth the solitary in families.* The ladies have erected *four* tasteful buildings on the ground given by the late Mrs. Thomas, and adjoining the Widow's Home at Fifty-ninth Street and Darby Road. They number forty-three orphans, and more are seeking admission. These cottages are paid for by generous friends, and are rapidly reaching completion. The appeal of these Christian women is for means to furnish them; nor do we believe the appeal will be in vain."

No doubt in "the old country" we have the poor law, which we are accustomed to think makes provision for the poor. But many believe that while the poor law makes such provision nominally, it defeats all the moral ends for which poverty is permitted by Providence. Many are impatient at seeing the Christian Churches doing so little for the poor, at least systematically. The Churches as such should ponder the text: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will reward him in time of trouble."

**CHEAP LITERATURE.**—"Memoirs of the Prince Consort," vol. i.; price sixpence. "Voyage of the *Sunbeam*," by Lady Brassey; price sixpence. Announcements of this kind, common enough in America, are a new thing in England. They indicate a new departure in the highest class of copyright literature. Hitherto, in this country, our best books have been very dear. The institution of reading-clubs may be thanked for this. There are many books which publishers know will seldom or never be bought by individuals, and for the sale of which they depend on the book-clubs. Publishers, who generally fix the price of books, knowing this, fix them very high. But, as the *Times* remarked in a

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recent article, book-clubs do not foster a habit of *reading*, but only of *skimming*. Readers get their curiosity satisfied, but not their minds filled. The idea of publishing at sixpence books that were brought out at fifteen shillings, trusting to a great sale to recompense the outlay, is adapted to effect a great revolution. Working people will get access to a higher class of literature. They will be able to possess the books, and if they like them they will really read them. Suppose three hundred thousand copies of the "Life of the Prince Consort" really read throughout Great Britain, what an influence might not that have on the mass of the people! The scheme will doubtless be unpopular in some quarters. But it seems to us to contain the seeds of a great public benefit, and as such we give it our hearty good wishes.

### American Notes.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY ALLIANCE.—If, when we look at the figures of our Church statistics, that seem to speak of a decay of religious life among our people, we feel sad, there are not wanting considerations fitted to make us hopeful. A year ago, there was organised at New Brunswick, N.J., the "Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance," consisting of theological students of all denominations throughout the land, and formed for the purpose of fostering among themselves an interest in missionary work. At that date the Alliance possessed more than 242 members. The second annual meeting has just been held at Pittsburgh, Pa., and was attended by 223 students, representing thirty out of the forty-six seminaries in the Alliance, and coming from twelve different denominations. That there should be enthusiastic addresses given on such an occasion is as natural as it is proper. Students—*theological students, without enthusiasm, romantic enthusiasm, if you like, will be apt to show themselves in after days* very dry sticks indeed, while even a brief experience of ministerial life will suffice, in most cases, for bringing into exercise and view the practical and business qualities any man may have. These students met not for mutual admiration purposes, but to compare notes as to the needs of certain fields, what qualifications are required in men who would go to such, that then the personal examination might be made as to the competency of the individual for that work and field. Doubtless only a percentage of the members of the Alliance will ever go to the foreign missionary field, but assuredly all that attend and take part in these meetings will, in whatever field they labour, engage in their work with a wider and a deeper interest in all that affects the enlarging of the Master's kingdom, and with a deeper sense of personal responsi-

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bility. The progress of the movement will be watched with great interest by all friends of missionary work, and we trust that when the Alliance meets in Chicago next year, its officers may be able to speak of some marked "forward" movement throughout the whole Church.

PRAYER FOR YOUNG MEN.—Akin in their purpose to these students' meetings is the recent observance of the annual week of prayer for young men, originated by our Young Men's Christian Association. The growth of these young men's associations in this country is very remarkable. In 1866 there were throughout the United States only three persons acting as district secretaries—that is, general secretaries for a defined district within which there were numerous local branches, each with its local secretary. In 1878 this number had increased to 114. In 1880 there was a farther increase to 161, while now, in 1881, there are 210 young men thus employed, giving all their time to association work. During this same period, 1866 to 1881, the number of associations has risen from 59 to 800. Young men's Bible classes conducted in these societies, and additional to those held in the Churches, have increased in number from 13 to 291. The property, buildings, &c., owned by the associations, was valued in 1866 at \$90,000, but to-day, 1881, its marketable value is nearly \$3,000,000, and yet no Church enterprise is the poorer for this vast contribution to Christian but non-Church work. We have in the United States 850,000 men employed on our railroads. The Young Men's Christian Association employs thirty-three secretaries, giving their whole time to promote the religious and general well-being of this important class. Nor has the work been in vain. During the railway riots of 1877, it was the influence of a Christian man who had given himself to their weal, that led the Cleveland railway employes to drive away from their town emissaries of the Pittsburgh rioters, who had gone to attack the railway depôt and freight buildings. Another important class cared for by the association is that of commercial travellers, *drummers*, as they are colloquially called. Of these there are 60,000 in the United States, all exposed to terrible temptations, and enjoying but few of the advantages or exemptions possessed by the men in the stores. To travel or work on the Sabbath day, to make untruthful representations, to tempt purchasers by joining them in sinful pleasures, and then to sustain their own energies by the free use of stimulants are among the obvious dangers of this class. There are 500,000 German young men in the country, and to these, five, but as yet only five, secretaries have been appointed. There is perhaps an equal number of coloured young men in the States, but these are moving in their own behalf. At a meeting of the coloured people in New York held lately, it was resolved to form a Christian Association for young men of colour! A building with all the needful arrangements, but possessing also some 200 bedrooms, will soon be erected, when we trust it will be found that the colour line does not involve any lack of administrative ability.

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**A PRESBYTER-AMBASSADOR TO LIBERIA.**—In connection with this local topic, I may mention that a few days ago, one known to many in Scotland, especially in the United Presbyterian Church, which once employed him as a missionary in Jamaica—the Rev. Dr. Henry Garnett, sailed for Liberia or West Africa, as Minister from the United States to the Government of that Republic. Dr. Garnett has, for the last twenty-five years, been a member of the New York Presbytery, ministering to a large congregation of coloured people. In early days he was a slave on a plantation, but has risen to be respected by the whole community, and looked up to as a leader by his own people. Until emancipation, he disapproved of the principles that led to the founding of Liberia; but since that event his position has materially changed. He is succeeded in his congregation by the Rev. S. P. Hood, whose striking address at the Philadelphia meeting of the Presbyterian Alliance will not soon be forgotten.

**CHICAGO REDIVIVA.**—Ten years ago—November, 1871—New York was startled by the telegram—"Chicago is in flames." Before that fire had burnt itself out, it had destroyed 17,450 buildings, leaving 98,000 people homeless, and causing a loss of \$190,000,000. The recently shown sympathy of the world with America in her bereavement had a foreshadow in the gifts of money and special articles which were then made by all nations to a desolate city. To this munificence, however, the energy of the Chicagoans was not inferior. While the fire was still raging, the agents of burnt-out merchants were speeding to New York to purchase new goods. Rich and poor worked with a will on the reconstruction of their city, and the retaining of their business, so that to-day Chicago has a population of 600,000. Business has increased during the ten years 162 per cent.; the transactions of the past year alone footing up \$1,000,000,000. It is estimated that the wealth of Chicago is now about double what it was before the fire, when it was estimated at about \$600 a-head. Go-ahead as Chicago was previous to that destruction, when men used to describe it as being "a chip of New York," only a little more so; its fiery, feverish restlessness and "drive," are now, perhaps, without a parallel. The grain trade and the cattle trade of the States have practically their centres in Chicago; so that a Chicago speculator making a "corner" in the necessities of life has the world's wealth at his disposal.

**RECENT LOSSES.**—During the last few weeks death has been busy among our ministers, removing several that had occupied prominent and influential positions in educational institutions. Lane Seminary mourns for the loss of her Professor of Church History, the Rev. Dr. Humphrey, who had only recently entered on his duties. In his early days, Dr. Humphrey had been a Congregationalist, but for many years past had held an honoured position in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. Hamilton College misses her energetic Professor of Moral



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Philosophy, the Rev. Dr. Mears, who died suddenly a fortnight ago. Dr. Mears had led a very busy life, having spent ten years in the ministry, ten more in the editor's chair, and a final decade in the classroom. In the neighbourhood of Hamilton College is Oneida, the seat of a well-known community that has long been one of the sores in our social life. This society, under the name of Christian Communism, and professedly in the interest of a transcendental spirituality, advocated a community of goods. It affirmed that property should be held by the society, and not the individual; that the individual should be merged in the community, and devote himself to the work assigned him by its head, while all profits of labour and business should belong to the society. Community of goods, when put forth as an antidote to the covetousness which is idolatry, soon led to a community of *persons*, as the only preservation against the sin of creature-worship, and thus, in the alleged interest of the highest forms of piety, men and women herded together, outraging the laws of God, of Nature, and of man. The bestiality of this conduct aroused Dr. Mears, so that, in 1878, he organised a movement directed specially against what the Oneidaists called the "complex marriage" feature in their system. All denominations joined in the attack, which led the community to modify their free-love arrangement. Previously, it had been imperative that there should be no personal attachments between the members; no continuous consorting with each other; the intercourse and connections of to-day must not be repeated to-morrow, the very desire for a continuance of such being an evidence that that individual had not yet risen to the high level of that negation of self to which the community sought to lead them! As the result of Dr. Mears's exposures, the community no longer required that men and women should live in such promiscuous intercourse, leaving it, however, optional with them to do so if they desired. A minority gladly took advantage of the change thus made, though the practice of the majority remains as it was.

Another very distinguished writer has also recently passed away. Dr. Henry Tappan, a well known writer on moral questions, and whose review of Edwards on the Will was much read a generation ago. Dr. Tappan has for a number of years lived in Europe, so that, to the present race of students, he is simply a writer of the past. Still his name will be long remembered as that of no mean combatant in the battle of the giants.

G. D. MATHEWS.

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## General Survey.

### GREAT BRITAIN.

*Edinburgh Lectures.*—Courses of lectures delivered in the afternoon or evening of the Lord's day, are the order of the day among the Scotch Churches. A series of lectures on non-Christian faiths is being delivered by ministers of the Established Church in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, of which Principal Caird of Glasgow University has already given two, on Brahminism and Buddhism. The Established Church ministers of Edinburgh are also giving lectures on the Presbyterianism of the National Church, and the reasons for maintaining its connection with the State. Another series is being delivered by ministers of the Free Church on the Evangelical Succession, that is, the succession of Evangelical life and doctrine, as represented by eminent men down through the Christian centuries. The first of the course was on the Apostle Paul, by Principal Rainy; the second on Augustine, by Dr. Marcus Dods of Glasgow. Lectures, chiefly of an apologetic character, were delivered last year by United Presbyterian professors and ministers, and the series is to be resumed after the new year. Mr. Robertson Smith is giving lectures on the subject of prophecy. A course of sermons for students has been begun by the professors of the New (Free Church) College of Edinburgh, to be continued during the session.

*Disestablishment.*—The State Church question seems about to become a burning one. At the meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly in November, the Free Church took a "forward" step in the direction of disestablishment. There is evidently a preparation for a regular trial of strength on the subject. Mr. Dick Peddie, M.P., gave notice before Parliament adjourned that he would move a resolution in the House of Commons in favour of Disestablishment in Scotland. The present movement has the support of that motion in view.

*The Bishop of Manchester and Ritualism.*—Dr. Fraser, the popular Broad Church Bishop of Manchester, has been trying a new plan to allay the commotions in his diocese. After consultation with his "chief Presbyters," the dean, and canons, and the archdeacons, he called a synod of his clergy to receive from him an episcopal admonition, to which, by their "assent," they were "to give effect," but without discussion or debate.

"'Things,' said his Lordship in substance, 'are coming to a crisis.' The very existence of the National Church is endangered by the prevailing 'ritual distractions.' It is said that there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the ornaments rubric. But how came it to be unused for 200 years? Do people mean to charge the Caroline bishops with hypocrisy and deceit? And it is not merely the

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wearing of the sacrificial chasuble that is objected to, but that it is so strangely manipulated. Then there are 'ministrants,' and subministrants, and servers, variously clothed and variously employed, some to swing the censer, some to light the altar candles, some to take the Priest's Biretta, some to ring the sanctus bell," and so on and on. Now, this must come to an end. While we are debating about the 'shape of a vestment,' or the 'mixing of a chalice,' the emissaries of atheism are busy among us; 'the canker of unbelief is eating deep into the very lives and consciences of our people.' Therefore the clergy of the diocese are 'admonished not to exceed the bounds of the ritual now practised or allowed, or which may hereafter be allowed in the cathedral church, and those who have gone beyond those limits are required to reduce their ritual accordingly.'

What has been the effect of this somewhat peculiar and rather theatrical proceeding? We are told that, on the following Sunday, there was no change in the observances of the High Ritual Churches. The famous Mr. Knox-Little,—whose brother the other day joined the Church of Rome,—told his people that he had sent in a formal protest to the Bishop. Mr. C. Wood, the president of the Church Union, came out straightway with a fierce response. He regards the Bishop of Manchester's proceeding as a mere attempt, under "an ecclesiastical disguise," to force the authority of the Privy Council on his clergy. But he and his friends are not to be "cajoled," into surrendering the "liberties" of the Church, and her "sacred ceremonies," at the bidding, not of a synod, for the synod was a sham, but of a bishop who "has so little regard to the glory of God and the law of the Church." The *Guardian* thinks very differently. And it almost seems as if an effort were to be made to get, meanwhile, some arrest laid on extreme ritualistic practices—not perhaps without some notion of what the Commission, which seems to be labouring hard, is about to report. In another direction, Dr. Fraser's plan received a serious check. Ten beneficed clergymen excused themselves from obeying his summons on the ground that—so they had been officially informed by the Dean—there was to be a choral celebration of the communion as a part of the service, and to that they had conscientious objections. Further, they objected to receive the communion in a place adorned with a material cross, vases of flowers, an altar-like table, and candles, &c. And further still, they declined to fraternise with the Romanising, confession-practising clergy of the diocese. After all, it seems that the Manchester movement is not very anti-ritual. Something more than we yet see is in it. Depend on it, Dean Cowie is not the man to lower the ritualistic flag, unless with some important gain in view.

*Letter from America.*—A recent letter in the *Guardian* claims the attention of our American friends. That letter states that during the last two years sixty-five ministers from other denominations have been admitted priests or deacons in the Episcopal Church of the United States. Of these, seventeen were Methodists, thirteen were Congregationalists, twelve were Baptists, eleven were Presbyterians, one was a Lutheran, three were Universalists, two were Roman Catholics, &c. The American Episcopal Church still stands at the bottom of the larger

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religious communities, but it is making decided progress. The upper ten thousand on the other side of the Atlantic, dukes and marquises and lords and baronets, in reality, though not in title, take, we suppose, to the aristocratic hat and coat, &c., which, in other countries, are the mark of the religious dignitary who has high social or even civil rank. Besides, we are not to be too sure that even in a democracy, where men are greatly absorbed in business and in politics, a religion of priests and ceremonies will not succeed. At the recent "Church" Congress in Rhode Island, the opener of the discussion on the education of divinity students said, "It is the laity who are demanding the right to be confessed. We cannot stop this demand. Let us have men to meet it. The treatment of *sin* is a science, and should be taught in every seminary."

J.

## FRANCE.

## THE SYNOD OF MARSEILLES.

WOULD you allow me to complete the information contained in *The Catholic Presbyterian* for the month of December, 1881, regarding the General Unofficial Synod of the Reformed Churches of France, which met at Marseilles from the 18th to the 26th October last?

In the proceedings of the Synod, what seems to me the most important point is, that not content with adopting some provisional measures for the meeting of a new assembly of the same character (as was done by the Paris Synod in 1879), it gave effect to the unanimous vote of the Churches which it represented by organising the government of the Unofficial Synod on a permanent basis. The Reformed Churches of France are now in possession of Presbyterian Synodal constitution, containing no less than forty-one articles, carefully prepared by two distinguished laymen of our Church, MM. Emile Vautier and Westphal-Castelnau, and unanimously accepted by the Synod. You will unite with me in acknowledging that this fact is worthy of special mention.

The new regulations are based on the plan of organisation which was drawn up by the Unofficial Synod of 1872. Five "consistorials"\* together form a synodal "circumscription," each of which has its own "particular synod," formed of all the evangelical and synodal pastors within the bounds, and of an equal number of lay delegates appointed by the kirk-sessions or parishes; and finally, each Particular Synod appoints to the "General Synod" (which meets every three years) a number of deputies proportioned to that of the evangelical pastors within the "circumscription." The leading change introduced by the Synod of Marseilles consists in the nomination of the different committees—permanent committee, educational committee, committee on the

\* A consistorial is formed by a group of churches, varying according to circumstances. Each contains, on an average, 6000 Protestants; but some consistorials are much more numerous, while others are much less numerous.

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pastoral body, finance committee, committee on the defence of the rights and liberties of the Church—whose duty it is to see, as far as possible, that the decisions of the Assembly are carried out, and to look after the general interests of the Church, among which, undeniably, the most pressing is the need for increasing the number of pastors.

It must not, of course, be forgotten that this organisation is entirely *unofficial*; in other words, it has not even legal existence in the eyes of the State. But the Reformed Churches of France have not ceased to be connected with the State, and hence, to a certain extent, dependent on it. From this state of matters, which is certainly somewhat strange, there arises a twofold limitation of our synodal confederation. First, it is limited with respect to the elements of which it is composed; for it includes merely the Churches—happily forming the majority—attached to the evangelical faith and the synodal system of government, which, with us, are found combined. The Churches in which the so-called “liberal” tendency predominates remain outside of our union, which has been resolutely based on the Confession of Faith drawn up by the Synod of 1872. There are, however, some very important congregations maintaining “liberal” views, especially in the south, as at Nîmes, Montpellier, Montauban, and Castres. But in every one of these congregations there is a considerable minority that rallies round the evangelical and synodal banner, and sends representatives to the synod of the district.

Secondly, the action of the Unofficial Synod is limited in respect of the number of questions which they can usefully and efficiently discuss. Everything that depends on the State lies beyond their jurisdiction; for instance, they cannot venture on modifying, in any respect whatever, the law regulating the election of kirk-sessions; nor will they be consulted when a professor of theology is to be appointed. Nevertheless, even in matters of this kind, the Unofficial Synods can exercise great influence in giving a common direction to the ecclesiastical bodies connected with our confederation, *i.e.*, the greater portion (nearly two-thirds, we believe) of the presbyteries and kirk-sessions of France. Besides—as was recently proved at Marseilles—the sphere of deliberation open to our synods is still very large. It would be difficult to exaggerate their importance, and the services they can render when animated by a good spirit, and well supported by the Churches. Though devoid of legal authority, they have considerable moral influence; it is their province to express, on all questions of general interest, opinions which will have great weight with believers. This has been done by the Synod of Marseilles, as your correspondent has remarked, with regard to the work of evangelists, Protestant schools, military service of pastors, versions of the Bible, &c.; and the secular press itself has testified to the importance and interest of the deliberations. Lastly, as the *means* and the *power* have hitherto been conjoined, the influence of our synods will go on increasing with the



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resources entrusted to them by the liberality of believers. At present our synodal budget is very moderate ; I shall not give any figures, that I may not evoke a smile of pity from our brethren in Great Britain and the United States, who are richer than we, as well as more accustomed to give generously for the wants of their Churches. It must not be forgotten, however, that our organisation is but beginning. Such as it is, our budget allows us, not merely to aid in defraying the expenses connected with our synodal meetings, but to add, from the year 1882, onwards, a moderate supplement of 100 francs to the salary of our pastors (so well known to be insufficient) ; to do something more for those of them whose circumstances are particularly straitened ; to support a preparatory school founded at Tournon (Ardèche) by the Synod of 1879, for the purpose of facilitating the studies of our future pastors, &c. The increase of the synodal funds will be a sure index of the sympathy which the cause itself will be able to gain among the Protestants of France.

To complete the sketch of our new organisation, I shall add a few words on the results which it seems destined to produce (on the supposition that it will go on and strengthen), both as regards the mutual relations of the evangelical and synodal congregations, and their relations both to the "liberal" Protestants and to the State.

Since the day when Louis XIV., with the foresight of deep hatred, inflicted on the Reformed Church of France a most deadly blow by prohibiting the stated meetings of her General Synods, this Church, which has never ceased to be Presbyterian by right, has been more or less Congregationalist in fact. The Synods of the Desert, of noble memory, were neither general nor regular ; the Unofficial Synod of 1848, and the Official Synod of 1872, were both dissolved without any provision being made for future meetings. The isolated condition of our congregations has been one of the main causes of the decay of faith and the weakening of the Protestant spirit within them. Henceforth, unless the decisions of the Synod of Marseilles remain a dead letter, everything will be changed, at least as regards the congregations which voluntarily connect themselves with the Synodal confederation. The Particular Synods will rally the congregations of a province into a living body ; the General Synods will present to the whole of the Churches a centre of life and unity. Unity will not exclude diversity. There are very palpable differences among the Synodal Churches themselves. The Churches in the north and in Normandy, just because they have less to suffer from liberalism (or rationalism) than those of the south, are more disposed to come to an agreement with it. Moreover, the Churches in the north, for geographical reasons that can readily be understood, are inclined to uphold the theological faculty of Paris ; while that of Montauban alone has the complete confidence of the evangelical congregations in the south. On these points, the Particular Synods of the north expressed themselves in a way pretty strongly opposed to the views of the other

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provincial synods : there was ground for fear lest, at the Synod of Marseilles, a violent shock might have been produced, perhaps a rupture. But experience has shown the happy influence of synodal government in uniting minds and hearts when there is a fundamental agreement on the basis of faith. On the most delicate and disputed questions, unanimous conclusions were reached ; the new constitution, in particular, was agreed to unanimously, and within a few hours. Mutual concessions of importance were heartily made ; there were neither victors nor vanquished ; we parted, more united and more favourable to synodical government than ever. We believe that the moderator expressed the common sentiment of the members when he ended his closing address with these words : "The times are grave : it is possible that events may rush on us, and necessitate . . . a new session of the present synod. But we have no fear of the future ; first, because we trust in the mercy of God, who has never ceased to watch over our Churches, and who has preserved them through so many trials and dangers ; and secondly, because we carry into our work the salutary and growing conviction that the synodal congregations of the Reformed Church in France really form one body—that body of which the apostle speaks, where he says, "When one member is honoured, all are honoured ; when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."

As regards our relations with the "liberals," I think the new state of things resulting from the decrees of the Synod of Marseilles may be briefly described thus : less conflict, but also less contact. What has for some years given a peculiar tinge of bitterness to the intestine struggle, which, unfortunately, has long divided the Reformed Churches of France, is the fact that the majority may have seemed desirous of imposing on the minority, by lawful means and through the sanction of the State, the declaration of faith adopted by the Synod of 1872,—a very wide declaration, certainly, and one which gives a summary of the fundamental principles of Protestantism, and of the main facts which form the foundation of the Church, notably the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For our part, we believe that the evangelical party, as a whole, has never had any such design ; but, to avoid even the appearance of having it, perhaps it would have been better if this point had been more clearly explained even at the Synod of 1872. Be this as it may, there is no longer any possibility of doubt. At the Synod of 1879, the evangelical Churches of France formally and solemnly repudiated all appeal to the secular power for support in matters of faith, all employment of force within the sphere of religion, in every possible form and degree. Whatever happens, the "liberals" will not be disturbed, where they have gained the majority, in the enjoyment of that unrestricted liberty of religious teaching within the Church which is with them the chief or even the only dogma. On the other hand, the evangelical Protestants, who hold that there can be no Church without a common faith, mean to use, and actually do use, their freedom in forming a con-

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federation on the ground of the Confession framed in 1872. As has been explained, they have just given this confederation a character of stability. Within the National Establishment, which is exposed to every wind of doctrine, they have undertaken to form, by voluntary association, a truly Christian Church, worthy of its glorious past, governing itself as far as possible, and preparing to provide for itself when necessary. They have been thereby inevitably led to separate from the "liberals," in some measure, though the formal and complete separation has not taken place, and even appears impossible so long as our Churches are connected with the State. Moreover, the evangelical members of the Church do not like to see the loosening of the ties uniting them with another portion of the Protestant family; they hope, and console themselves with the thought, that this partial separation will prepare the way for a closer union, and that the Synodal confederation, by its very existence and its happy fruits, will gradually attract all the truly religious and Christian elements in the Reformed Church.

The Evangelical Churches of France have felt the need of union and consolidation all the more because they are the less able to count on the good-will and support of the Government, which, however, has no reason for ill-will toward us. It is well known that the great majority of French Protestants, of all denominations, are liberal in politics, and attached to republican institutions. Hence it is, properly speaking, against the Roman Catholic Church that the *Culturkampf* is directed on this side of the Rhine as well as on the other; but, to show impartiality, care is taken to strike us at the same time as it is touched; and, as we are the weakest, it is very often we who suffer most. The watchword at present is, "Strict application of the Concordat," which, with our Governments, means, "Emphatic assertion of the rights of the State, diminution (to say the least) of the liberties of the Church." Thus, the former Minister of Public Worship, M. Constans, in his circular of 10th August, 1880, maintained, in opposition to his predecessors and the course of action pursued till that time, that the State has as much right as the Church, or more, to determine the conditions on which the right to vote on *religious* matters in parishes is exercised. The present Minister, M. Paul Bert, recently gave utterance, in a public address, to the strange paradox, that morality is gaining all the ground open to religion; and it is in his hands that the temporal interests of the French Churches are now placed. Hence, some grave measures are announced, as, the suppression of the University Theological Faculties, in place of which mere Seminaries will be substituted; the partition of the Church at Paris into several parishes (in the hope that a majority will thereby be secured for the "liberals" on some points). The late Director-General of Public Worship, M. Flourens,—who is more moderate than M. Paul Bert, and who resigned in consequence of the appointment of the latter as Minister of Worship,—nevertheless, in an

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official statement to the new Minister, uttered words which contain a gratuitous injury to the evangelical majority of the French Reformed Church. He boasts of having put an end to a "persecution" within the Churches, which, he says, "was the scandal of our age." The Government, in breaking the doors of the convents, fancies that it made merely a moderate use of the power conferred on it by the law; but it thinks that the Consistory of Paris (for we believe the grudge is against that body), in refusing to appoint to the Church of the capital a pastor who does not believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, has become guilty of a persecution, which is not merely one of the scandals, but the scandal of our times!

It is evident how things stand; on the side of the Government and our relations with them, there are dark spots on our horizon. We believe—I add, in my own name, we hope—that the insuperable obstacles which the Government will not fail to point out in the course it now pursues, will bring it at last to the truly liberal solution, the separation of the Church from the State. How we shall then have to congratulate ourselves on having begun, by this voluntary arrangement, to lay the foundation of an independent organisation, and on not being taken wholly unawares. Meanwhile, since union makes strength, our Synods will help us to defend in the best possible way the liberties that remain to us.

We have said enough to show the nature of the somewhat novel experience by which the Reformed Churches of France are now being tried, and to prove, we hope, that they deserve the kind consideration and attention of the Presbyterian Churches in Great Britain and the United States. We regret that those Churches were not represented at the Synod of Marseilles.\* For this we can only blame ourselves and our inexperience. We hope that when our Synod next meets, invitations addressed in time will enable us to profit by those visits, counsels, and fraternal encouragements which are specially needed when one is weak and has great duties to perform.

A word in closing. Perhaps you will say: "What about your Catholic fellow-countrymen? Have you forgotten them? Are you leaving untouched the grand work of evangelisation in France?" Far from it. Our Synodal Union, however, *as such*, cannot as yet do very much for evangelisation. Our first duties are to be performed to Protestants, and it will be a great thing to fill up some of the many vacancies in our churches. The Synod has expressed its sympathy with the work carried on in our land by the different Evangelisation Societies, both French and foreign. The labours of the latter, though still very limited in comparison with the extent of the field, are none the less important and productive of blessing; and I hope, God willing, to give

\* The Presbyterian Church of England wrote us a very cordial letter, and led us to expect the visit of delegates, who, however, were prevented by unfavourable circumstances.

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you an account, some time, of one of those works in which I have been called to engage assiduously,—the Evangelical Society for Home Missions.

C. E. BABUT.

## PROPOSED CHANGE ON THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES.

THE two French Protestant Faculties (Montauban and Paris) are now under Professor Paul Bert, the newly appointed Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, and thus they still remain connected with the *Université*—a central administration, the creation of Napoleon (1808), for the whole of France, under the Minister of Public Instruction, comprehending all the faculties down to the elementary schools. This is the official *corps enseignant*, responsible only to the State. It has faculties of theology (as well as of law, &c.) in the great cities, which are not to be confounded with the *séminaires* for the forming of priests, but which are on the same footing as, say, the professors of the *Ecole Polytechnique* in Paris. Now, it appears certain that, having of late secularised the lower and middle schools, the Government is going to apply the same rule to the University, that is, hand over to the Minister of Public Worship (two functions are at present united in the same person) all the State faculties, Roman Catholic and Protestant. This is only logical. But before showing the consequences of such a severance, as regards especially the Protestant Faculties, let us relate a fact which will show the religious principles of the Minister.

On the 23rd of November, M. Bert received an official visit from all the professors and lecturers of the Protestant faculty of Paris, Dean Lichtenberger at their head. Professor Sabatier, who was present, has given important details of this visit in the *Journal de Genève* and in the *Débats* of Paris. Among other things M. Bert said\* :—"Fully believe that I do not disregard the services which the Protestant faculties of theology have rendered and are still rendering. They have always been faithful to the mission which the State, in organising them, had committed to them. I would like to be able to say as much of all. Your faculties of theology have worked ; they have received graduates whose titles and knowledge have raised the honour of your Churches, and they have published works of criticism and of religious history by which lay society has largely profited. Do not, therefore, believe that the disquieting rumours which have been circulating among the public are applicable to you. The only measure one could have thought of—a measure which public opinion has, it appears to me, received with favour—would be to transfer you from the Ministry of Public Instruction to the Ministry of Public Worship. The University will not lose you without regrets."

Then, turning toward Dean Lichtenberger : " You are not anxious, I think, to be separated from the University ? " " No, M. le Ministre ;

\* *Eglise Libre*, 2nd December.



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by no means. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the measure which you lead us to anticipate. We love the University. It is an honour for us to belong to it. It has been our support, and the safeguard of our scientific liberty. I could urge most important reasons against the change you inform us of, but this is neither the place nor the time. We only entreat you, M. le Ministre, not to take an ultimate decision without having heard us." "I promise you," said M. Bert.

Does the Minister, then, intend to separate Church and State at one stroke? No; he holds, as the Premier does, to the Concordat, and is anxious, by means of it, to keep down the Church of Rome, with its wonderful organisation and its immense wealth. Does he, then, wish, as Minister of Public Instruction, to have nothing more to do with religion? Not quite; for he said to the Dean: "It is impossible that the University should leave out of its studies the main branch of the history of humanity—I mean the history of the religious phenomena the influence of which has been so decisive in its destinies. I will thus, perhaps, have to ask some of you to help me in introducing it into the University, and in cultivating it there." The Minister of Public Instruction intends to pass over to the Minister of Public Worship the Church Department, Romish, Reformed, Lutheran, Israelite, and the Mohammedans in Africa, as Mohammedans come also under the control of the *Ministre des Cults*. What, then, will be the consequences of the ministerial *projet* in regard to the Protestant Faculties? Well, by it these Faculties fall at once to the level of the Roman Catholic *séminaires*, which deliver only certificates of studies; and thus the Faculties can no more receive graduates—"Bacheliers en Théologie," or "Licenciés," or "Docteurs." Such is the opinion of the *rédacteur* of the *Eglise Libre*. The same journal writes: "No doubt, in changing from one department in the administration to another, the schools of theology will not change their programme, and their studies will not be less good or less complete than in the past; but the situation of the professors, perhaps, will be singularly lowered in the eyes of the public, and the title of 'pasteur' may well signify no more for the people than that of priest. This minimising of the intellectual and scientific prestige of masters and scholars, this assimilating of the schools of theology to the manufactories of Catholic abbés (while it would be most important to show before the eyes of all the enormous difference which exists between both institutions), will have a deplorable effect if it is not anticipated by some new combination."

Thus the minister, in aiming at the Roman Catholic clergy, strikes the first blow and the heaviest at the Protestants. "The Church of Rome," writes the *Protestantisme* of Paris, "will easily make up its mind to shut up its (State) Faculties of theology, which, suspected of Gallican tendencies, without students, without graduates, without an earnest scientific activity, have never been acknowledged by the Holy See; but it is quite a different thing with the Protestant Faculties."

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Be that as it may, it is most humbling for the National Reformed Church of the Huguenots thus to be tossed from one minister to another—from Paul Bert, Minister of Public Instruction, to Paul Bert, Minister of Public Worship; and to hear this second Paul Bert revealing his ideal of a Minister of Public Worship to the theological professors who want to pay him their respects in such terms as these: "The Minister of Worship must not be in his functions of minister either religious or anti-religious. His ministry is not an affair of doctrine." True; but what, then, is it?

Such measures, in our opinion, as that other enacted at the late founding of the Protestant Faculty in Paris (a Minister of State appointing nearly every professor without consulting one *consistoire*), and such a sword of Damocles as the present threat of M. Bert to break the connection with the theological State Faculties, now suspended over the heads of our brethren in France, can only, with God's blessing and in His hidden ways, hasten the day when Blaise Pascal's ideal, still higher than Paul Bert's, shall at last be realised in his own country: "*Bel état de l'Eglise quand elle n'est plus soutenue que de Dieu.*"

CLÉM. DE FAYE.

## THE SYNOD OF THE FREE CHURCHES.

THIS Synod recently held its annual meeting at Paris, under the presidency of Dr. de Pressensé. The forty-two congregations forming the Union sent fifty-six representatives.

From the reports presented, it appears that there is not much change in the conditions of the congregations in the capital. Large spiritual progress, however, has been made in other large cities, as Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Lyons, and particularly in certain districts of the south, where rationalism had prevailed, such as Tarn. But the Synod is acting cautiously in organising new congregations, and is not inclined to enter fields in which the Gospel is already proclaimed by other denominations; hence it refused to appoint a pastor in a district where two evangelical ministers of the Reformed Church, as well as a Wesleyan pastor, are labouring; while, as an indication of fraternal regard, it agreed to request the presence of representatives from the Methodist Church and the permanent commission of the Unofficial Synod of the Reformed Church. At the same time, there was shown little disposition to modify the distinctive tenets of the Union: M. Barnaud contended for the principle of an individual profession of faith, and the maintenance of a clear line of demarcation between the Church and the world, taking occasion to allude, firmly but courteously, to the want of discipline in the Reformed Church; while M. de Pressensé, though rejoicing in the recent action of that Church, especially at the Synod of Marseilles, declared his intention to remain where he is, but expressed the hope that he might see the day when the Free Church would disappear before the Reformed Church, freed from the bonds of the State.

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On one point, however, there were significant indications of a change, elicited in a discussion regarding the formation of a General Sustentation Fund. The Synod, indeed, already possesses a central fund, formed by the voluntary offerings of the different congregations, and employed for aiding weak parishes according to their necessities. Instead of this, however, it had been proposed, some time ago, to form a common treasury for the purpose of providing each of the pastors with a minimum salary, and the subject, after having been referred to the churches for their opinion, came up again before the Synod. It was agreed on all sides that the institution of such a fund was at present impossible; but an endeavour was made to pass a resolution approving of the general principle, though deferring its application. As was clearly pointed out by one of the speakers, two tendencies revealed themselves—pure Congregationalism, and, on the other hand, an approximation to Presbyterianism, which was maintained by MM. de Pressensé, Pozzy, Leon Pilatte, Hollard, &c. Twelve churches declared that they would regard the abandonment of Congregational principles in this case as the rupture of their federal ties; while M. Pilatte frankly avowed the change that had taken place in his views on ecclesiastical matters, and declared his growing and lively sympathy with Presbyterianism. The other members who shared his views all felt the practical difficulty of applying the proposed system to weak and scattered charges; this determined the vote of the Synod, which, by 18 to 37, refused to declare in favour of the common fund.

The meetings were closed with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

## GERMANY.

### GERMANY IN 1881.

*Recent Progress in Vital Religion.*—The readers of this journal are already aware, that through the grace of God, considerable progress has been made in our German church-life during these recent years. The expression "German neology" has almost ceased to be significant. German theology and the German Protestant Church are decidedly moving more and more toward a positive relation to doctrine, and the negative tendencies are becoming more and more discredited. The events of last year abundantly bear evidence of this.

*Waning Influence of the Protestantenten Verein.*—How little ground the rationalistic Protestantenten Verein has gained in Berlin, notwithstanding all the strenuous efforts put forth by several journals in their favour, is very evident from the last meetings of the 13th General German Protestantentag, which were held in Berlin on the 9th of June and following days, for the purpose of creating a deeper interest in its principles and aims. The attendance at these meetings on the part of

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the Berlin public fell off from day to day, showing that little interest was taken in them. Even the *Protestanten Verein* does not go far enough in negation for the radical tendencies of modern unbelief; and hearts which seek peace and comfort in religion, find it only in the preaching of the pure Gospel. Thus the Berlin churches, in which the ministers preach the Gospel on Sabbath after Sabbath, are filled with worshippers, while the churches of the so-called Religion of Humanity remain empty. Nevertheless, the Assembly was occupied in listening to reports full of complaints and accusations against the "Inquisition in the Evangelical Church," directed partly against the preachers and partly against theological professors. Professor Bluntschli, of Heidelberg, the celebrated Jurist, who suddenly died three months later, on the 21st October, when, after the close of the Synod of the Church of Baden, he was proceeding to convey a report to the Grand Duke, in a concluding resolution, which, he submitted, took up the position "regarding the relations of the Church of the Reformation to civil society," that the aim of Christianity at the present day will be gained not by dogmatic orthodoxy, but by the activity of Christian love; and that Jesus Christ must be seen in the light of modern science, and not in that of the obscure dogmatic formulas of bygone periods of development.

*Meetings of the Positive Party.*—An altogether different reception was given to the meetings of the friends of the Positive tendency which were held in Berlin during the course of the year. Besides the meeting of the "Positive United," gathered together from all parts of Prussia, held in October of 1880, there was also held in Berlin the "Pastoral Conference," at the same time as the "Protestantentag," at which Hofprediger Stöcker delivered a warm address in favour of his Christian-social movement, and the "August Conference" of the Confessional Party within the National Church. (See *The Catholic Presbyterian*, 1880, p. 351.) Here also Hofprediger Stöcker was received with loud applause; but the assertion of Professor Sohm, of Strasburg, that there was no party of the "Reformed" in Germany, and that therefore the ecclesiastical authorities were under the necessity of promoting exclusively the Lutheran element in the Church could meet with no acceptance by any one acquainted with the actual state of matters, and a friend of the "Union," which had become an historical necessity.

*Progress of the Inner Mission.*—Another encouraging fact worthy of notice is this, that those engaged in the work of the Inner Mission are more and more receiving general recognition, and their work is becoming connected with the official life of the Church. A general collection in the National Churches in behalf of the Inner Mission has been ordered to be made, and in the provinces of Saxony, Luther's home-country, a great mission conference was held awakening a deep and wide-spread interest in the work of the mission. In the publishing house of the Orphanage in Halle, where formerly under Aug. Herm

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Francke, information regarding missions to the heathen world was from time to time published, there has now begun to be published within the past year a new illustrated missionary journal under the care of Dr. Frick, director of the Francke Institution, with the co-operation of Dr. Warneck and Dr. Grundemann, entitled "Geschichten und Bilder aus der Mission" ("History and pictures from the mission"), which deserves a wide circulation. There has also since October of last year begun to be issued from the same publishing house a monthly Church journal to represent the views of the Positive Union, which is supported by the most eminent men of the party. The Congress for the Inner Mission (see *The Catholic Presbyterian*, 1881, p. 223), held its 22nd general assembly in Bremen in September last, a town in which the efforts of the Protestant Verein found greater sympathy than in any other town in Germany. The meetings of the Congress here were, nevertheless, very successful, and most beneficial results have followed.

"*Gustavus Adolphus Verein*."—This society held its general assembly for the whole of Germany, in the town of Dortmund, in August last. The income reported was the largest that had ever been received, amounting to 740,954 marks. Up to the present time the total income of this society has amounted to 16,328,828 marks, which have been distributed among the evangelical congregations of the Diaspora. The great jubilee gift amounting to 80,000 marks was voted to the Austrian Protestants. On this account there is about to be instituted in Vienna a fund in behalf of the Lutheran reformed pastors and teachers, together with their widows and orphans, a noble celebration of the centenary of the Edict of Toleration by the Emperor Francis Joseph II. (1781).

*New Translation of the Bible*.—In the month of October more than ten years' of labour were brought to a close in work which cannot but find special sympathy in England, where about the same time a similar labour was brought to a successful close. I refer to the revision of Luther's translation of the Bible. The Old Canstein Bible Society, founded in Halle by Aug. Herm. Francke, has undertaken the publication of the Revised Bible, on which have been constantly engaged scholars most eminent for their acquaintance with the Hebrew and the Greek text. In about two years this edition will be issued from the press and submitted to the Churches, and thereafter the committee, taking cognisance of the criticisms that may be made on the work, will pass it through a final revision and publish it.

*Provincial Synods*.—Among the other memorable and happy events of the year must be reckoned the "Provincial Synods" of the National Church, held in six of the old Prussian provinces, in the month of November. The presidents chosen by all these synods belonged to the Positive Party; the party of the Left had in no case a majority, and often a small, insignificant minority. The resolutions they came to were very important. Among other things it has been resolved to abolish



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surplice fees. Resolutions have been passed against the laws passed by Dr. Falck, limiting the religious instruction imparted in the public schools and in the seminaries for the training of teachers (see *The Catholic Presbyterian*, 1880, p. 313), and in favour of religious instruction again becoming the centre of the entire system of school instruction. At most of the synods also the restoration of the so-called General Visitation was sought, an arrangement in former years fruitful in blessings to the Church. Moreover, almost everywhere it has been resolved to prepare new hymn books in accordance with certain definite principles. The Inner Mission has been adopted by the whole of the district synods as demanding their attention, and other important resolutions have been adopted bearing upon Christian work which we cannot now particularly speak of.

*Christian Life in the Universities.*—In conclusion, I may mention that there seems to be passing through the ranks of the youth attending our universities a new breath of Christian life. May the Lord of the Church increase and strengthen it more and more! The discussion of the Christian-social questions in Berlin and elsewhere has in a very powerful way affected German students, and given rise to a reaction against the supremacy of the Jewish element which threatens to flood our German gymnasias and universities. The Christian German students held a meeting, in the beginning of August, in the Kyffhäuserberge, in which, according to a tradition, the Emperor Barbarossa has slumbered for centuries, waiting for the restoration of a united holy Germany. Animated addresses were delivered, and the regeneration of the Fatherland on Christian German principles was there celebrated; and although in this movement there may be much that is indefinite and confused, yet there is a blessing in it, and we may therefore say of it, "Destroy it not!"

*Our Losses.*—I now add only a few words regarding the serious losses which the German Church and science have sustained during the past year, and regarding the most important of the works that have appeared in the department of theology. On the 8th May Dr. FRIEDRICH ARNDT died in Berlin. He was well known for his homiletic and religious works, and was one of the first of the faithful witnesses for the Gospel from a Berlin pulpit at the time of the dominancy of Rationalism. There preceded him to the grave, on the 23rd of April, a man whom we also reckon as belonging to us, from whose faithful hand thousand-fold blessings have gone forth, and whose funeral was followed by a vast multitude of the poor and needy, moved by gratitude towards their benefactor—the Rev. GEO. P. DAVIES. I further name Dr. MUHLHAUSSEER, the leader in all conservative-Christian efforts, and the warm friend and helper of all the labours of the Inner Mission. He died on the 20th January. On the 8th July, Professor Dr. SCHÖBERLEIN died in Göttingen. He was an eminent dogmatic theologian, and an ardent student of Christian art, particularly of Church music. His "Schatz

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des liturgischen Chor- und Gemeindegesanges," in three volumes, 1864-72, is an inexhaustible source for the improving of the services of public worship. The father of the Inner Missions, who had grown grey in its service, and at last was disabled, the venerable Dr. WICHERN, known and honoured over the whole Christian world, passed away to the eternal rest and peace above on the 7th April. I may also name the philosopher LOTZE, whose death may be regarded as indeed a loss to the Christian Church. He was the zealous and able opponent of Materialism. He died suddenly in Berlin on the 30th June, a short time after he had been called from Göttingen to the University there.

*New Books.*—Among the most important publications that were issued during the past year, I name two excellent works—"System der Christlichen Wahrheit," by Professor Dr. Frank, of Erlangen; and Dr. Dorner's great dogmatic work, "System der Christlichen Glaubenslehre," two volumes. These two master-works in positive theology were completed last year. I may place by their side two publications of a negative tendency—Alb. Ritschl's "Metaphysik und Dogmatik," and the Christological work of his Göttingen colleague, Professor Dr. Schultz, "Die Lehre von der Gottheit Christ, communicatio idiomatum." In the department of biography may be mentioned the life of "Gustav Knak" (the noble, loving, warm-hearted Berlin preacher), by the missions-director, Dr. Wangemann; in that of exegesis, the third edition of that splendid work, "Biblich-Theologische Lexicon der N. T. Gräcität," by Professor Dr. Cremer, of Greifswald. We cannot pass by a work dealing with the ecclesiastico-political war now being waged in Germany, Ludwig Hahn's "Geschichte des Kulturkampf in Preussen." Finally, we mention another work which will serve the interests of Christianity—viz., Constantin Frantz's "Schelling's Positive Philosophie," in three volumes.

PFOZA.

L. WITTE.

## ITALY.

*Assembly of Chiesa Libera.*—The thirteenth General Assembly of the *Chiesa Libera Italiana* (Free Church of Italy) was opened in Florence on the 4th of October, by an eloquent discourse of Signor Gavazzi. Thirty-six churches or congregations were represented, and the number of members of Assembly was forty-seven. Amongst them one was glad to see a Member of Parliament, the Honourable B. Mazzarella who, ever since he came to the knowledge of the Gospel, when he was a political exile in Piedmont, more than thirty years ago, has remained a faithful adherent and an eloquent preacher of the Gospel. He is now in very indifferent health, and the Italian Government, whom he has long served in the capacity of a Judge of the Court of Appeal in Genoa, has pensioned him handsomely. The General Assembly of his Church bestowed upon him the graceful and well-deserved honour of acclaiming him their honorary president. An

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important discussion as to the conditions to be required from candidates to ordination, and another on the question of moving the evangelists from one place to the other, terminated with a vote leaving them with full confidence to the decision of the committee. A member proposed to have itinerant evangelists, but the thing was not thought possible at present. On the proposition of the Rev. J. R. MacDougall, one of the morning sittings was devoted entirely to prayer and humiliation, that the work of evangelisation may in another year proceed with greater vigour than in the past.

A report on the several Churches and on the work in general, was presented and discussed. The Rev. Mr. MacDougall, as treasurer, presented a financial statement, from which it appears that about £6000 sterling are necessary every year to carry on the work of the Free Church of Italy. He also stated that the special fund for aged pastors and pastors' widows, under the diligent care of its treasurer, Mr. Haskard, is slowly progressing, and can give now an annual income of 1700 francs (about £68 sterling). The sittings of the assembly ended by a religious service, with communion.

*Waldensian School at Florence.*—On the same day on which the assembly of the Chiesa Libera was opened, the session of the Waldensian Theological School of Florence was inaugurated with a lecture by Prof. Comba, on John vii. 17. Many friends from amongst the Protestant ministers of Florence were present, and some of them addressed the students in very earnest words. The number of these may appear small, if compared with those of similar institutions abroad. They are only twelve this year, but this comes of the greater and more solid preparation now required for admission in the school. Two of these young men come from the Southern provinces.

*Professor Revel's Italian Testament.*—A new and most important publication has just appeared by one of the Florence professors, I mean the translation of the New Testament into Italian by Professor A. Revel. This is not the first work of Professor Revel's. His complete and exhaustive Hebrew grammar, and his two volumes on the literature of the Old Testament, have won for him the honour of being elected a member of the *Accademia Orientale*, which is a branch of the highest institution for learning in Italy. He is perhaps the first Protestant member of it. Now the publication of his version of the New Testament proves him to be not less versed in the knowledge of Greek than in that of Hebrew. In regard to the text, he has chiefly followed Tregelles, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, taking the *textus receptus* when they differed. The result is that his text is substantially the same as that of the English revisers, with whose great and important work the Italian Bible students can in that way become acquainted. As for the translation itself, his chief aim has been fidelity to the Greek text, and that certainly is the chief duty of a translator. Still it may be regretted that this love of fidelity even in the most minute details has sometimes betrayed him into construc-

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tions and expressions which savour more of the Greek than of the Italian idiom. On the other hand, some obscure and difficult passages have been made clear and intelligible. It would be idle (and yet almost every one does it) to compare this translation with that of Diodati. I am sure that Professor Revel does not intend his work to supersede that time-honoured, popular, and really classical translation. If I read his intentions aright, he rather means his Testament to be a companion to that of Diodati, and as such I have no doubt his work will be of very great service. It brings, as it were, the text itself under the eyes of the readers who are not acquainted with Greek, and these are the very great majority. It avoids the redundancies and the obsolete words of Diodati, it gives a clearer meaning of many a passage, and a much better division of the text. Unhappily, works of this kind find as yet a very limited number of readers in Italy. Professor Revel, who evidently aims at perfection, has, like a fond mother, clothed the child that cost him such long labour, in the most beautiful dress that Italian typographical art could produce. Fine paper, broad margins, type of the very latest fashion, elegant paper, binding; all this helps to make a volume costly, and although it is sold for 3 fr. only, it is not to be wondered at if the common readers prefer to content themselves with a fivepence Testament of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I hope his excellent work will find some sale abroad, so as to relieve him by little and little of the financial responsibility of the undertaking.

*Canonization of Four Saints.*—Great doings this week in Rome! No less than four new saints were proclaimed on the 8th of December, the anniversary of the proclaiming of the impious dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. To show of what stuff Roman Catholic saints are now made, allow me to tell in a very few words the story of the most notorious of the four—a Frenchman named Benoît Labre. He was born about the middle of last century, and seems to have been a poor, half-doited man, who could never learn to read or write. To “make his salvation,” as the phrase goes, he left his family in youth, and spent several years in pilgrimages from one sanctuary to another. At last he arrived in Rome, and here he lived till he died in 1783. He did not dwell in any house, but, like the lowest kind of mendicants, he used to sleep now here, now there; sometimes under an arch of the Colosseum, at other times on the outside stairs of some church. His food he received by begging, mostly at the convent gates, and when he arrived too late, or when the so-called soup was thinner than usual, or even by simple preference, he used to eat refuse of every kind, contending for it with the very street dogs amongst the sweepings that were at that time so plentiful in the streets of Rome. But his principal title to glory seems to be, in the eyes of his admirers, that he never changed his clothes, and never washed his person, or combed his hair, or did anything in the way of personal cleanliness. The consequences had better be left to imagination. The

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fact is, that his biographer, Mr. Serret, boasts for Labre that he was carrying about his person "a living sackcloth," under whose myriads of prickings he would lie for hours perfectly motionless, in penance for his sins. As far as I could discover, it is not said that he ever did anything in any way profitable to mankind, or rendered the Church the slightest possible service. The heart of this *saint* never had a throb for his fellow-men, not even for his own family. He loved no one, spoke to no one, but was contented with being the dirtiest and most pestilent beggar that even the streets and the churches of Papal Rome have ever seen. And yet he was no sooner dead than some fanatical people discovered in him the stuff of which saints are made of now-a-days. But however great may have been here below the merits of a saint, he will never be put on the altars unless his devotees can gather money enough to pay for the long and tedious process to carry him through the intermediate steps of *venerabilis* and *beatus* to the ultimate and final honours of saintships. How much money is swallowed up in a "canonization" nobody could tell with absolute certainty, and if any one of those concerned in the affair was able to cast up the sum, he would never dare reveal it to the world at large. The affair of Labre's canonization, which began in the latter part of the last century, and which in 1873 had carried him up to the rank of venerable, is only ended now. He has been more fortunate than others, or, rather, his devotees have been more active in getting money than those of other saints. Of course, these things are now known and published everywhere, and any one can guess what credit they reflect on religion in the minds of the Italian people. *Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat*. The Pope could commit no more egregious folly than to assemble in Rome a few hundred bishops in order to proclaim a saint the most useless, dull, and filthy mendicant that ever disgraced the streets of the ex-capital of Popery.

*Settlement at Rome of Rev. J. G. Gray.*—I must not close this letter without giving a piece of news that will interest all English-speaking Presbyterians, and that is the induction of the Rev. James Gordon Gray, lately of Naples, as the permanent pastor of the Scotch congregation in Rome. Since the death of Dr. James Lewis, English Presbyterian services have been kept up in Rome by ministers sent there for the winter season; the time had come to give things a more regular settlement. Mr. Gray has done a great work in Naples, especially in connection with the flourishing institution for young ladies which he started there, and he will surely do even a greater work in Rome. His first enterprise will be to build a suitable place of worship *intra muros*; the present one, outside Porta del Popola, being doomed to come down to make room for a new street. Mr. Gray has received already several sums of £1000 each from friends in Scotland for the purpose, but building in Rome is so expensive that he will need a great deal more.

A. MEILLE.



## OPEN COUNCIL.

## COLONEL GORDON IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

In *The Antislavery Reporter* for November, 1881, occurs a short article censuring certain views expressed in a paper on Colonel Gordon, in the September number of *The Catholic Presbyterian*. The whole tenor of that paper was eulogistic, but in Colonel Gordon's letters there were so many strange religious views, expressed, too, so aggressively, that we thought it right to enter a caveat. In particular, we commented on his disposition to put the sincere Mohammedan on the same level with the sincere Christian, and we dissented from his conduct on one occasion when he gave money and made a great ceremony at the opening of a Mohammedan mosque. The *Reporter* condemns our "rather severe remarks," quite courteously, but decidedly, and quotes the words of Peter in Acts x. 34, and the words of some old English writer who maintains that by reason of the universal mercy of the Lord, Pagans and Gentiles may be saved, for the mercy of the Lord is extended to every man, and "there can be no doubt that the Gentiles who have led a moral life, and been obedient, and have lived in mutual charity, and have received something like a conscience, agreeably to their religious principles, will be saved." On this we beg to offer a few remarks.

1. We are not impressed either with the wisdom or the fairness of the writer. Instead of accepting the aid of a friend, very cordially desiring (as we did) to advance the antislavery cause, he picks a controversy with him on a theological question. He says not one word of our very cordial admiration of Colonel Gordon and his noble work, but simply reproves us for our narrowness.

2. It happens that we have studied Acts x. 34, and other passages of the like import. On the solemn and important subject of the salvation of the heathen, our opinion is based, not on one or two passages, but on all that we find in the Revelation of God. (a) We by no means think that the heathen, even in their heathen state, are all beyond the reach of mercy. God, by His Spirit, who worketh when, where, and how He pleaseth, may so influence the hearts of heathen as to prepare them for everlasting felicity through Jesus Christ. There is nothing in the Bible, or in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church to exclude this idea. It is pleasing to think of it as possible. To what extent it is actual we cannot say, and ought not to attempt to say. It is enough for us that it is a possibility. (b) We object very decidedly to *formulating articles* affirming the salvation of the heathen. Men go quite out of their province when they lay down a doctrine on the subject. Colonel Gordon does so when he maintains that the worship of the Mohammedan is as acceptable to God as that of any Christian. The writer quoted by *The Antislavery Reporter* does so in the words enclosed by us in marks of quotation. Writers, would-be liberal, do the same every day. And the kind of doctrine they formulate is usually salvation by works. (c) We object to any view of the salvation of the heathen that implies that the knowledge of Christ makes little or no difference to men. Some speak as if men were as near God's mercy without the knowledge of Christ as with it. Now, the normal way of acceptance with God is certainly through *conscious faith* in His Son. That men may be saved by Christ without being conscious of Christ, we fully believe, in the same way as we believe that without such consciousness infants may be saved. But this must be regarded as a secondary and exceptional method. We object to any view that elevates this method to a level with the other.

The whole subject is one of great mystery, and it were well if people would remember the truth so emphatically taught by Bishop Butler, that the government of God is a scheme imperfectly comprehended. It is the extreme confidence with which some men blurt out their views that is so objectionable, and their readiness to call persons narrow-minded who cannot make the Bible say all that these men wish it to say.

W. G. B.